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THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE HUDSON'S BAY RECORD SOCIETY

EDEN COLVILE'S
LETTERS
1849-52



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FORT GARRY

FROM THE DRAWING BY HENRY J. WARRE, 1845-46

LONDON CORRESPONDENCE
INWARD
FROM EDEN COLVILE
1849-1852

EDITED BY
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1956

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	xiii
LONDON CORRESPONDENCE INWARD FROM EDEN COLVILE, 1849-52	I
APPENDIX: EDEN COLVILE'S LETTERS TO SIR GEORGE SIMPSON, 1849-52	173
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	273
INDEX	281
<i>Frontispiece</i>	
Fort Garry (From the drawing by Henry J. Warre, 1845-46)	

INTRODUCTION

I

IN 1849 the British government, by Letters Patent dated January 13, granted the Hudson's Bay Company the Colony of Vancouver Island. Its officers on the Pacific Coast were busy later that year establishing the new colony. Fort Victoria, the centre of the first settlement, was designed to replace Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River as a source of provisions for the fur posts, and to serve as a buffer against another such influx of American settlers as had caused the loss of the Oregon country south of the forty-ninth parallel. The Company's officers were also engaged in winding up various affairs of the Company south of the new border. It was while occupied with overseeing and reporting upon these activities that Eden Colville, who had been appointed Governor of Rupert's Land, to act in the absence of Governor Sir George Simpson, wrote the first of the letters printed in this volume.

For six years the Company had been conducting a strategic retreat from the southern Oregon country before the American settlement which had sprung up about its feet.¹ For the same period its officers in Red River had been waging a sudden and bitter war against an offshoot of the American frontier in Minnesota Territory, an advance by American traders to the Red River boundary at Pembina. The struggle had been the more strenuous in that the appearance of the Americans had coincided with a growing discontent among private traders of the Red River Settlement. The establishment of a competitive market at Pembina had precipitated an outburst of private trading in furs throughout the Red River District, a flow of smuggled furs across the border and the import of goods from St. Peter's in Minnesota. The first two of these were a violation of the Company's right of exclusive trade under the Charter of 1670, and the third a threat to its ability to compete.² Nor had the danger been ended by 1849; the illegal trade continued, the peace of the Settlement was disturbed by demands for representative government and the dismissal of

¹ See *H.B.S.*, VI and VII, Introduction by W. Kaye Lamb.

² Pritchett, *Red River Valley, 1811-1849*, is the best history of the trade of the Red River valley to 1849; see particularly chapter XXIII. Pritchett, however, made no use of the Company's archives.

unpopular officials. There was need for a Governor of Rupert's Land to reside in the growing and turbulent Colony until the troubles caused by the new connection with the American frontier were ended.

With this object in view Eden Colville, son of the Deputy Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, Andrew Colville,¹ had been made Governor of Rupert's Land on January 3, 1840,² and arrangements made for him to accompany Sir George Simpson to Red River and Norway House, and then to continue on to the Pacific Coast. He reached Fort Victoria in October. The winter was spent there, and in journeys south of the border and along the coast to the north. Colville then travelled across the Rockies with the spring express in 1850; in June he met the Council of the Northern Department at Norway House; he hurried from there to Fort William to meet Mrs. Colville, and on August 11, 1850, they arrived in Red River.

II

The Red River Settlement in 1850 had a population of over five thousand³ and was made up of three communities. These were the Scottish colony of Kildonan, the French and *métis* colonies of the Upper Settlement and the White Horse Plain, and the Scottish and Orcadian half-breed colony of the Middle Settlement, or St. Paul's, and of the Lower Settlement, or St. Andrew's. It is possible to say that there was a fourth and a fifth colony, the Indian settlement of Swampy Crees in St. Peter's just above the delta of Red River, and that of Saulteux at Baie St. Paul up the Assiniboine. The Indians, though natives, were settlers or colonists who had renounced a nomadic for a sedentary existence. Each of these colonies was, to a major degree, a distinct community, of separate origin and individual character. Much of the history and many of the troubles of the Red River Settlement are to be explained by the variegated character which that settlement had developed over the forty years which had passed since Lord Selkirk⁴ had first conceived the

¹ For a biographical note see *H.B.S.*, I, 435.

² [Hudson's Bay Company Archives] A.1.00, pp. 2-3, minutes of a meeting of the Governor and Committee. Subsequent classification numbers refer to Hudson's Bay Company Archives. The commission was dated April 4, 1840 (*ibid.*, p. 38).

³ P[ublic] A[rchives of] M[anitoba], hereafter P.A.M., Red River Census of 1849, gives a total population of 5,391 persons.

⁴ Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk. For a biographical note see *H.B.S.*, I, 464-5.

project of founding a civilized community in the central wilds of North America.

The Scots of Kildonan were the remnant left from the failure of Selkirk's colonizing enterprise, the dogged survivors of the warfare, famine and flood which had befallen the Colony in its first years. Of all the various elements Selkirk and his executors had drawn to the banks of the Red River, the Irish had largely, the de Meurons and the Swiss had wholly vanished by 1850. Many Scots had left early or migrated later, but some remained, the sifted remnant of a remnant. Only one Pole, one Hollander, one Norwegian, and one Dane, were listed in the census of 1849 to recall the early variety of Red River colonists.¹ Wholly Scottish by nationality, still largely Presbyterian by faith, bi-lingual but cherishing the Gaelic only as the language of home and kirk, the Kildonan Scots were further distinguished by their persistence in living by the cultivation of the soil. In a colony dominated by the fur trade, the majority of the denizens of which were hunters, tripmen or traders, the Scots dourly tilled their fields and tended their cattle. And as they refused to follow the hunt, or ply the oar, or set the net, they refused also to intermarry with the Indians or, to a degree, with the half bloods. They remained in 1850 a little island, not yet crumbling, of European stock in a society in which the proportion and diffusion of Indian blood were steadily increasing.

Only one concession had the Kildonan Scots made, and that of necessity, to the mixed society in which they found themselves. The minister of Presbyterian faith and Gaelic speech whom Selkirk had promised, his heirs had not provided; the Company, when it took over the Colony in 1835-36, did not assume the unrecorded obligation. The Kildonan Presbyterians, for want of the services of a minister of their own, had reluctantly accepted those offered by Rev. David Jones² and Rev. William Cockran³ of the Church of England. Public worship was held in the Upper Church, later to become St. John's Cathedral Church, when Rev.

¹ P.A.M., Red River Census, 1849.

² The Rev. David T. Jones, a Church Missionary Society missionary, came to Red River in 1823 as successor to the Rev. John West (see p. 1). Jones was made chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1825 and returned to England during 1828-29 for the purpose of being married. He left the Settlement finally in 1838. Ross, *Red River Settlement*, p. 127 et seq.; Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 59.

³ The Rev. William Cockran first came to Red River in 1825. He was succeeded as Chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company by John Chapman in 1851. Alexander Ross (*Red River Settlement*, p. 181) described Cockran as "a man of

David Jones modified the Anglican liturgy to render it less distasteful to the majority of the worshippers. Their weddings were solemnized and in the churchyard the dead were buried. But this was considered a temporary arrangement by a proud and faithful people, resolved to have a minister of their own kirk and tongue.¹

At the core of the French colony there was also a distinct group of unmixed blood and an exclusive faith, the French Canadians who had settled around Bishop J. N. Provencher's² Roman Catholic mission of St. Boniface. Their numbers had been from time to time recruited by new comers from Lower Canada, brought in to serve the mission, or annually engaged by the Company as labourers. The French remained, however, a small group, and were overshadowed by the greater number of their partial relatives, the *métis* of mixed French and Indian blood. These people, freemen discharged by the North West Company, their Indian or half caste wives, and the progeny of such marriages, had colonized Red River from the fur posts of the North-West. The Red River *métis* were, so to speak, indigenous colonists. They had been drawn to Red River from all over the North-West by its soil and climate, and by the encouragements held out by the Hudson's Bay Company and the Roman Catholic missionaries. The former wished to free the posts of dependents and hangers on, the latter to fix the abodes and tame the instincts of their wandering and wayward charges, both Company and Church to educate and civilize these offspring of the fur trade. Thus St. Boniface and the growing settlements up the Red, which were to become in after years the parishes of St. Vital and St. Norbert, were almost wholly settlements of *métis*, Catholic by faith, French and Indian in speech as their people were French and Indian by descent. And the union of French and Indian blood was reflected in the indifferent practice of a subsistence agriculture coupled with an eager pursuit of the buffalo hunt and an addiction to the seasonal labour of the *voyageur*, or tripman.³

pious character . . . especially zealous as a Church of England man . . .". See also Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 60, and MacLeod, *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*, passim.

¹ The story of the Selkirk Colonists and of "the Presbyterian question" is told by Alexander Ross in *Red River Settlement*.

² Mgr. Joseph Norbert Provencher (1787-1853). He came as a missionary to Red River in 1818, became Bishop of Juliopolis *in partibus*, 1822; of the North-West, 1847; of St. Boniface, 1852. See Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 60, 66, and Morice, "The Roman Catholic Church West of the Great Lakes", pp. 121-38.

³ Giraud, *Le Métis Canadien* . . ., is the definitive history of the *métis*, the people of mixed French and Indian blood.

While the *métis* settlements of the main river had a Canadian core, that at the White Horse Plain, or St. François-Xavier, was wholly *métis*. It had as its centre the agricultural settlement of Grantown, founded by Cuthbert Grant,¹ Warden of the Plains and chief, despite his Scottish name, of the *métis* "nation". But the chief occupations of the people of White Horse Plain were the buffalo hunt and the fishery at Lake Manitoba. The pull of Indian ancestry and the nomadic life was even stronger here than on the Red River, the counter-pull of settled and civilized life even weaker.

The French community of Red River was marked off by its Catholicism and its nomadism. It had also had its origins in the service of the North West Company, and although the old enmity had died with the coalition of the Companies and settlement in Red River, there remained a sentiment of separateness, a sense of being a native community with rights in the country. They were the *bois-brûlés*, the "new nation" of the *métis*. This tradition of self-conscious nationality was even further re-enforced by the annual experience of organization in the great summer hunt. In numbers the French made up rather more than half the population of the Settlement. The maintenance of the peace in Red River was, therefore, in great part a matter of civilizing and placating the always restless and sometimes turbulent *métis*. But on the Council of Assiniboia, the local government, only two members might be presumed to speak for them in 1850, the aged Bishop Provencher and Cuthbert Grant, Warden of the Plains, now old and given to drink.

The third of the Red River colonies, that of the Scots-Orcadians, was also predominantly of mixed blood. The retired officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the discharged servants, if they had married women of the country, had been faced with the choice of leaving their families behind when they returned home, or of undertaking the risky experiment of taking Indian wives and half-breed children to live in civilized society. From this painful choice settlement in Red River offered an escape. There country wives would not be distressed by the unwonted demands of civilization, there the marriage "by custom of the country" could be solemnized and the children educated.

From the coalition of the Companies in 1821, therefore, retired officers and servants whose engagements had expired, some of them Scots but the majority Orkneymen, had been coming to settle with their families in Red River. They had chosen their lands for the most part at the Grand Rapids of the Red, some twenty miles below the Forks. Though the first heads of families were European, the wives when not

¹ For a biography see *H.B.S.*, I, 440.

Indian were half-breed, and the children of course of mixed blood. But the retired officers possessed means ; there was no need for their sons to go on hunt or trip. In so far as they were disposed to work, they put their effort and their capital into farming. The example was for the most part followed by the families of their poorer neighbours, the discharged servants of the Company. In consequence the Lower Settlement, though one of a mixed blood population, was a stable agricultural society, some of whose members were landed gentry, comparatively speaking, but nearly all of whom were definitely farmers. Only a few became hunters, tripmen, or petty traders.

Just as their former rank and present means enabled them to form a stable and civilized society, so the same factors gave them a proud self-consciousness. These one-time officers and servants of the great Company carried into retirement something of the prestige and all of the pride of their former positions in the service. The people of the Lower Settlement, and particularly the wealthier among them, prided themselves that they were not Selkirk colonists, like the Kildonan Scots, and not feckless nomads, like the *métis*. And already their wealth and pride were visibly evident in the stone church of St. Andrew's completed in 1849, in the large rectangular houses with "Hudson Bay" roofs sloping to all four walls, most of wooden construction but some already of stone.¹

A second and minor St. Andrew's was also coming into being along the Assiniboine, some two miles above the Forks. There, beyond the land reserved by the Company, an English-speaking half-breed settlement was beginning to line the north bank of the river, and would soon become the parish of St. James.

Such were the three main divisions of the Red River Settlement. There was another element, in but not of, the Settlement, the officers and servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. There were two establishments in Red River, Upper Fort Garry at the Forks and Lower Fort Garry some twenty miles below, or, as they were some times called, Garry Upper and Garry Lower.

Upper Fort Garry, according to a contemporary description,² was "situated about 400 yards above the confluence of the Assiniboine and Red River. . . This fort has . . . been rebuilt on a more elevated site than it formerly occupied, and on an improved plan. Its form is nearly square, being about 280 feet from east to west, and 240 from north to south. It is surrounded by a stone wall of 15 feet high, and of

¹ Ross, *Red River Settlement*, p. 143.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 142-3.

considerable thickness ; having two large gates on the north and south sides, and four round towers or blockhouses at each corner, with port and loop holes for cannon and musketry. In the inside of the wall is a gallery which runs round the fort, and which affords a pleasant walk, and an extensive view of the surrounding country. The principal dwelling-house—a large and commodious building—occupies the centre of the square, behind which, and near the northern gate, stand the flagstaff and belfry. There are also houses within the walls, for the accommodation of the officers and men attached to the fort ; together with stores and granaries, and—would it were not necessary to add—a jail and court-house for the colony. It is a neat and compact establishment, and reflects great credit on Mr. Governor Christie, under whose eye the work was accomplished . . . Upper Fort Garry, the seat of the colony Governor, is a lively and attractive station, full of business and bustle. Here all the affairs of the colony are chiefly transacted, and here ladies wear their silken gowns, and gentlemen their beaver hats. Its gay and imposing appearance makes it the delight of every visitor ; the rendezvous of all comers and goers.”

“ Lower Fort Garry,” Ross continued, “ is more secluded, although picturesque, and full of rural beauty. Here the Governor of Rupert’s Land resides, when he passes any time in the colony. To those of studious and retired habits, it is preferred to the upper fort.”

The Upper Fort was the centre of the fur trade of the Red River District and a depot of “ country provisions ” and trade goods for the northern districts and the Settlement itself. It was also the seat of government for the Settlement, or more precisely speaking, for the District of Assiniboia, the region within a radius of sixty miles from the Fort. As such, it was the residence of the Governor of Assiniboia, and of the Chief Factor in charge of the Red River District. In 1850 the latter officer was Chief Factor John Ballenden.¹ Under him was a staff of accountants, clerks, a doctor and various carpenters, smiths and labourers.

Lower Fort Garry had been begun by Governor George Simpson in 1831 to replace the old Fort Garry at the Forks, but the superior position of the latter had defeated his project and led to the re-building of the Upper Fort. The Lower Fort did not become the effective centre of trade or seat of government for the Settlement. All trails continued to lead to the Upper Fort. By 1850, the Stone Fort, as the Lower Fort was commonly called, was used as a supplementary establishment to that of Upper Fort Garry.

¹ For a biography see *H.B.S.*, III, 426–7.

hidden fear, ready neither to try to redeem the local Indian from his misery nor to prepare against an attack from the plains.

The rulers of this heterogeneous society, so evenly but so definitely graded from a foundation in primitive barbarism to a crown of stiff Victorian gentility, had always been careful to number their people. Seldom can so simple a community have been so frequently enumerated.¹ The latest census had been taken in 1849; in it the heads of families were named and numbered, their places of birth, their religion, the number, sex and marital condition of their dependents recorded, their occupations noted, if other than the main occupations of Red River, farming, hunting and tripping. Churches and schools, cattle, farm implements, boats, carts and mills were listed. There were 2,180 Protestants and 2,511 Roman Catholics of European or mixed blood. Of the Protestants some 300 may be estimated to have been Kildonan Scots and Selkirk settlers with their children. Of the Indians, the Swampies numbered 460, the Saulteaux 77. These, with newly arrived military pensioners and their dependents, to the number of 163, made a total population in 1849 of 5,391. This total, except for the pensioners, was the difference between natural increase and internal migration on one hand, and numerous emigrations from 1815 to 1849 on the other. There were 4 Protestant churches and 3 Roman Catholic, with 9 and 3 schools respectively. The Settlement possessed 2,085 horses, 6,014 horned cattle and 3,096 sheep. Swine and poultry were not enumerated. Forty boats and 1,918 carts witnessed to the importance of hunting and tripping. Eighteen windmills and two water-mills ground the flour consumed in the Settlement and sold to the fur trade. No reaper or threshing machine yet hinted at efforts soon to be made for agricultural improvement.² The impression left by the census is that of a simple community, made self-subsistent by agriculture to some degree, but dependent on hunt and fur trade, and as yet more a religious and missionary settlement than a political community, however rudimentary. The impression is in general a true one.

III

If its population was diverse and divided by race, religion and rank, Red River none the less possessed a definite character and was held together by

¹ Censuses of Red River were taken in 1815, 1819, 1823, 1827, 1832-33, 1838, 1840, 1843, 1846-47, 1849 and 1856.

² All figures are taken from the Red River Census, 1849.

a common framework. The Settlement was not communally, united by its location, the interdependence of its trade, plans hunt and more from agriculture, and the common subscription of Indian blood relationship. This common character, as well as the diversity of its elements, was evident to the visitors from the outside world whom Red River now had again every year.

Most came by way of York Factory on the Winnipeg River, and up the Red to the Forts as young R. M. Ballantyne¹ had done in 1841. That junior clerk of the Company, known to be sitting at a desk at the Upper Fort, had thus described the settlements of the lower Red:

"... we passed an Indian settlement, the cultivated fields and white houses of which, with the church spire in the midst, quite indicated our way, after being so long accustomed to the gloomy shades of the prairie forest."

The Lower Fort is a substantial fortification, surrounded by high walls and flanked with bastions, and has a fine appearance from the river.

The river banks were lined all the way along [to the Upper Fort] with the houses and farms of the colonies, which had a charming, clean appearance; and, from the quantity of land stuck in the bars, nearly the number of pigs along the banks, and the healthy appearance of the children who ran out at the crossings to gaze upon us as we passed, I inferred that the natives generally were well as to life in the world.²

Ten years after Ballantyne, in 1851, another visitor was to arrive to what was still an unusual country from the north across the plain from St. Pierre's soon to be replaced by St. Paul. His name was J. William Drake³ and he was a companion of Governor Alexander Ramsey⁴ of Minnesota Territory, who had come to Pembina to make a treaty with the Chippewa Indians south of the line. They had travelled down the Red to the Lord Selkirk's long isolated and all-but-forgotten colony. Drake was charmed by what he saw, he was Rattling, and, like all visitors to Red River, not least by the contrast between the wilderness they had traversed and the "happy extensive village" strung along the east banks of the Red.

¹ Robert Milder Ballantyne (1821-1841) clerk in the Hudson's Bay Company, 1841-47; writer of adventure stories.

² Ballantyne, *Diary*, Part 2, 85.

³ J. William Drake (1811-1891) came to Minnesota in 1842; secretary to Governor Alexander Ramsey in 1851.

⁴ Alexander Ramsey had been appointed Governor of the newly-organized territory of Minnesota in 1849. See *Dictionary of American Biography*.

Bond and Ramsey arrived during the harvest, and the former thus described the scene :

“A village of farmhouses, with barns, stables, hay, wheat, and barley-stacks, with small cultivated fields or lots, well fenced, are [*sic*] stretched along the meandering river, while the prairies far off to the horizon are covered over with herds of cattle, horses, &c., the fields filled with a busy throng of whites, half-breeds and Indians—men, squaws, and children—all reaping, binding, and stacking the golden grain ; while hundreds of carts, with a single horse or ox, harnessed in their shafts, are brought in requisition to carry it to the well-stored barn, and are seen moving, with their immense loads rolling along like huge stacks, in all directions. Add to this the numerous windmills, some in motion whirling around their giant arms, while others motionless are waiting for “a grist.” Just above, Fort Garry sits in the angle at the junction of the Assiniboin and Red rivers, with a blood-red flag inscribed with the letters H.B.Co., floating gayly in the breeze. Opposite is the catholic cathedral, built of stone in 1832, and still unfinished. The bare, rough, unplastered wall, in front, is cracked and shattered, and is surmounted by two steeples ; one finished and containing a chime of bells ; the bare timbers of the other tower aloft, dark with age and nakedness.”¹

So Bond saw Red River busy with its harvest along the riverside by the open plain, under the walls of Fort Garry and the twin towers of Provencher’s cathedral. And Ramsey recalled for a Minnesota audience an even more idyllic panorama :

“Imagine a river flowing sluggishly northward through a flat alluvial plain, and the west side of it lined continuously for over thirty miles with cultivated farms, each presenting those appearances of thrift around them which I mentioned as surrounding the first farms seen by us ; each farm with a narrow frontage on the river of only twenty-four rods in width, but extending back for one or two miles, and each of these narrow farms having their dwellings and the farm out buildings spread along the river front, with lawns sloping to the water’s edge and shrubbery and vines liberally trained around them, and trees intermingled—the whole presenting the appearance of a long suburban village—such as you might see near our eastern seaboard, or such as you find exhibited in pictures of English country villages ; with the resemblance rendered more striking by the spires of several large churches peeping above the foliage of the trees in the distance ;

¹ Bond, *Minnesota and its Resources* . . . , pp. 287–8.

whitewashed school houses glisten here and there, amidst sunlight and green ; gentlemen's houses of pretentious dimensions and grassy lawns and elaborate fencing, the seats of retired officers of the Hudson Bay Company, occasionally interspersed ; here an English Bishop's Parsonage, with a Boarding or High School near by ; and over there a Catholic Bishop's massive Cathedral, with a Convent of the Sisters of Charity attached ; whilst the two large stone forts (at which reside the officers of the Hudson Bay Company, or of the colony, one called Upper Fort Garry, and situated at the mouth of the Assiniboine, and the other termed Lower Fort Garry, which is twenty miles farther down the river) helped to give additional picturesqueness to the scene.

I had almost forgotten to mention, what is after all the most prominent and peculiar feature of that singular landscape—singular from its location—and that is, the numerous *wind mills*, nearly twenty in all, which on every point of land made by the turns and bends in the river, stretched out their huge sails athwart the horizon, and seemingly looked defiance at us, as invading strangers that were from a land where steam or water mills monopolize their avocation of flour making.”¹

IV

These visitors received and could convey only a general impression, however lively. The picturesque in Red River sprang to the eye ; the plan, the anatomy and physiology, of the Settlement was not so apparent. But the Colony had been planned, and it had become as organic a community as a mediaeval village, and one rigidly conditioned by, and remarkably adapted to, its environment.

Red River was, in the first place, a river front settlement, so designed by its founders, and in 1850 there was still not a single farmstead back from the riverside. The Settlement was to extend from the Indian Village to some miles above the Forks, and from the Forks sixty miles up the Assiniboine before a settler moved out to the plains behind. The reasons for this insistence on river frontage are clear. The rivers in the early years had been the chief means of movement, and so remained for heavy goods and winter travel in 1850. It was only along the river banks that there was timber for shelter, lumber and fuel ; when the local supply was diminished, logs were rafted down from upstream. Only at the

¹ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the First Legislature of Minnesota*, Appendix VIII, pp. 90–1, Governor Alexander Ramsey to the Minnesota Agricultural Society.

river's edge was the land well drained and easily cultivated. The rivers were also the sole source of water, for it was believed that water could not be obtained by sinking wells back on the plains. All these things served to bind the settler to the river front.¹

These actual ties, of course, were strengthened by custom. It was Selkirk who had introduced to Red River the river lot survey of Lower Canada. In Red River this scheme of narrow lots running back from the river front proved to have all the immediate utility for colonization it had had in French Canada. But the framework of the land survey was filled with a content not French and not Canadian. Red River agriculture, as distinguished from the horticulture practised at many fur posts, was begun by Selkirk's Scottish settlers. They had been reared in the ancient infield and outfield system of Scotland. In this old Celtic mode the cottage and byre of the farmstead stood by the infield, often at a stream's edge in a valley. Behind stretched the larger outfield, often pasture or fallow, for all the manure went to the infield, and the outfield was cropped only at intervals. On the hillside behind, or in the hills, the farmer had rights of pasturage and in summer sent his cattle back into the hills to graze around the lone sheilings of the herdsmen. In Red River cottage and byre had risen by the river side and the little "parks" on the banks, cropped year after year, recalled the infields of the old land. The back portion of the two-mile-deep lot was pastured as the outfield was; there was no need to submit it to occasional cropping. And a further two miles behind each lot had become the "hay privilege" of the owner of the lot, with all possessing right of common to hay and pasturage on the outer plain. In the English-speaking settlements, then, the Red River Settlement was a Scottish valley-side spread flat on a North American plain, within the framework of a French-Canadian survey.²

The *métis* similarly used the river lot survey for purposes of their own. As the Indians erected their winter wigwams in wooded ravines, the *métis* built their cabins in the wooded fringe of the river front for the sake of shelter and fuel. From the river itself they drew water and fish. On the silted river banks and "dry points" and in openings in the woods, they sowed their patches of potatoes and barley. On the plain behind the women and old men cut the rank prairie hay. But what they chiefly

¹ The writer has summarized the evidence for this paragraph in "Agriculture in the Red River Colony", pp. 317-20.

² A brief and illuminating sketch of Scottish agriculture in the last quarter of the eighteenth century is to be found in Hamilton's *Industrial Revolution in Scotland*, p. 19 et seq. Note especially that "in Scotland, and especially in the Highlands, tillage was subordinate to pasture".

valued in this river-front site was the free access it gave at once to the waterways before and the open plains behind. Like their Indian ancestors, what they desired was an extensive and seasonal use of the land, a use not confined to agriculture, and with it the right to move freely where they would. The river-front settlements of the *métis*, then, much like those of the Scots and the half-breeds, were an organic part of a complex way of life which varied with the seasons and rested at once on the agriculture of the riverside and the use of the plains for haying, grazing and hunting.¹

The agriculture which was part of Red River life was crude and uncertain. Its techniques were closer to those of Highland Scotland, or the villages of mediaeval England, than to those of the agriculture which was to replace it a mere twenty-five years after 1850. It was uncertain because agriculture at 50° north latitude on the edge of the North American plains was subject to climatic and other hazards which the advance of agricultural science has since diminished. Above all, it remained a largely subsistence agriculture because its one limited market, that of the fur trade, it had to share with the produce of the buffalo hunt, the "plains provisions" of pemmican and dried meat. In 1850, Red River agriculture was circumscribed both by its own handicaps and by the want of an adequate market for any surplus it might produce in a favourable year.

The extent of these limitations is revealed by the fact that in 1849 only 6,392½ acres were under cultivation. Nor was that cultivation of a high quality. It began with the breaking of the tough prairie sod with hoe or plough in "rigs", narrow strips of land convenient to plough. When the sod had rotted, the result was a black, clay loam of great fertility and of a tenacity which made its tillage a matter of skill in judging when it was in the right condition. But in general both breaking and tilling were easy, for the trees and brush could be avoided, there were no stones, and when the soil was neither too wet nor too dry, the plough ran easily. The plough, with its wooden share shod with iron and a wooden mouldboard, seems to have been a version of the light plough of Scotland, though it is to be assumed that there were ploughs modelled on those of Quebec. All-metal ones were soon to be brought in from St. Peter's. The plough was the chief implement of cultivation, but the horse- or ox-drawn harrow was used to work down the soil and cover the seed. No fallow had been needed to rest or clean the fields before 1850, but a few farmers, like the

¹ The writer has touched on this interesting and significant subject in "The Significance of Site in the Settlement of the American and Canadian Wests", pp. 98-100.

historian Alexander Ross,¹ had begun at that date to practise fallow and repeated ploughings for both purposes. It was especially necessary by 1850 to combat the spread of the "Canada" thistle, which thrived in the rich Red River soil. That Ross should also have found it necessary to advocate fall ploughing in preference to spring is an indication of the sloven pace of Red River farming.²

The fields were fenced in what the Scots called "parks". Given the proportion of wild land to cultivated, it was, of course, sensible to fence the grain and let the stock run at large, a consideration which outweighed the harm done to the stock by the running at large of bulls. The fences were of "post and slab" for smaller fields and yards, of rails for larger fields, and these fences did much to make the river front look like one continuous farmyard.

All sowing was done in the spring, for fall wheat had failed to survive the winters of Red River. When the land was ready, the seed was sown broadcast by hand and harrowed into the soil. The time of wheat seeding was from the last week of April to mid-May, but later in a wet and backward spring. Wheat was hardy enough to survive the late spring frosts, but the more tender barley and potatoes had to be sown after the middle of May and in early June. These three were the principal crops of Red River; oats were grown, but not as extensively as might have been assumed.³ The cultivation of a dwarf, acclimatized, Indian corn of Mandan stock was confined to farmers of Indian descent and to alluvial points on the rivers. There it did ripen, despite the latitude and climate.

Though barley was much used as feed for stock, and for barley soup, wheat was the chief cereal crop. Seed had been brought in at various times from England and Canada, but the most widely grown strain was that of the seed obtained from Prairie du Chien on the Mississippi in 1820. It had arrived late and was not sown until late in June; what matured was the seed of the "Prairie du Chien" wheat of Red River. It remained the popular strain throughout the history of the Settlement, because it matured early and was a soft wheat, suitable for grinding in the mills of

¹ Alexander Ross, author of *The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State* (London, 1856). For a biography see Wallace, *Docs. Rel. N.W.C.*, p. 495, and for an outline of his public work in Red River see Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 61.

² Ross, *Red River Settlement*, pp. 111-14.

³ London, P[ublic] R[ecord] O[ffice], W[ar] O[ffice], 33/21, "A Report on the Colony of Red River, Prince Rupert's Land" by Major J. F. Crofton, p. 16; Crofton gives the proportion as one of oats to two of wheat or barley.

the Settlement. Many claimed that wheat in Red River ripened on the average in ninety days from sowing, and this claim was probably made for the Prairie du Chien variety. But the ninety-day period seems to have been an exaggerated claim. There is, however, evidence that on the average the time required for spring wheat to mature was well within the average frost-free period of the Red River valley, one hundred and twenty days. There was some discontent in 1846 and 1847 with the quality of the wheat grown, and the coming of a body of troops also made it necessary to be concerned with the yield of Red River grain. Sir George Simpson ordered fifty bushels of early "Black Sea Wheat" from Canada in 1846, and a quantity of the same variety from England. Twenty-five bushels were sent out from Canada in the spring of 1847, with twenty-five of another, unnamed variety. Frost on August 28 and 30 injured it, and it failed to mature. That which was forwarded from England however, was fall wheat and not spring wheat, as Simpson had ordered, and the grain from this seed failed to mature in 1848. Some two bushels of Black Sea wheat brought from Canada in 1847, however, did mature successfully in 1848; this was apparently a different lot from that brought in from Canada and sown in 1847. In 1847 the Council of Assiniboia ordered Black Sea wheat from England, and it arrived in 1849; there is no record of how it succeeded, but from this time on "Black Sea" was an important and superior, but not popular, strain with Red River farmers.¹ The more progressive farmers tried the new strain, but most remained true to the tested Prairie du Chien, or cheerfully sowed mixed seed. These efforts of the Company to improve the agriculture of Red River, like earlier ones, were largely frustrated by the hazards of pioneer farming and the indifference of the generality of Red River farmers.

If late or early frosts, drought or flood, grasshoppers from the plains and migrating birds spared the crops, the harvest began in late August and ran on into September, as the late harvest did in 1851. The grain was generally reaped with the sickle, although the scythe and presumably the cradle, were coming into use. (By 1857 Alexander Ross was to be trying out a reaper imported from St. Paul.)² The women and children bound the sheaves behind the men, and stood them in "shocks". The

¹ These points are discussed in the writer's "Agriculture in the Red River Colony". For Sir George Simpson's efforts, see D.4/36, Simpson to Alexander Christie, July 7, 1847; D.5/20, Christie to Simpson, September 4 and November 30, 1847; D.5/22, Christie to Simpson, July 17, 1848; D.5/25, Governor and Committee to Simpson, April 4, 1849. The shipment of the Canadian seed wheat is to be traced in B.134/c/62 and 63.

² P.A.M., Alexander Ross Papers. A. Ross to James Ross, September 8, 1857.

reaped grain was carted from the fields to the farmyards and stacked. In winter the threshing began, with the flail pounding out the grain on the threshing floor in the barns. It was then winnowed in the cold cross draught of the two-doored barns, and sifted through home-made sieves. The threshing season lasted throughout the winter, grain being threshed as it was needed for food or sale.

Much of the coarse grain grown went to feed stock, the rearing of which was as important a part of Red River agriculture as the growing of cereals. Cattle were the principal livestock of the English-speaking farmers. A few head of cattle had been brought in as calves to the North-West by York Factory both before and after the Colony was begun. But the chief sources of Red River stock were the herds driven up from the Mississippi in 1822 and 1823.¹ These animals had been sold among the settlers and it was their progeny that grazed on the river lots behind the farmsteads. Their breed is unknown, but was probably nondescript. Some Galloway cattle had been brought in by York before 1833, presumably for the experimental farm maintained by the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1848 again, with a view to improving the quality of the stock, a superior bull and two Ayrshire cows in calf were sent out.² The quality of the cattle in 1850 was inferior and declining, however, largely because they ran at large and the bulls were not effectively controlled. But the numbers had increased until the provision of pasture and hay had become a major concern of the Red River farmer. The resources of river lot and hay privilege had become insufficient for the larger stockmen. These men had the encouragement of an export market; from 1839 some cattle were driven to St. Peter's for sale.³ Some were now wintering their cattle by cutting hay at a distance and sheltering their cattle nearby, as in the Pine Hills to the east, or the Long Ridge and Portage la Prairie to the west.⁴ In this way even the farmers had come to use the plains, and had become dependent on them, as were the *métis*.

¹ Ottawa, P[ublic] A[rchives of] C[anada], (hereafter P.A.C.), Bulger Papers, Andrew Bulger to Andrew Colville, September 1, 1822; Ross, *Red River Settlement*, p. 82.

² A.6/27, Governor and Committee to Simpson, June 3, 1848; Glazebrook, *Hargrave Correspondence*, p. 123; Ross, *Red River Settlement*, p. 390.

³ D.4/106, Simpson to the Governor and Committee, July 8, 1839; D.5/6, Governor and Committee to Simpson, March 1, 1841.

⁴ See, for example, D.5/21, A. Christie to Simpson, January 31, 1848. The Company was wintering sixty head of cattle at Netley Creek, while McDermot was wintering a herd above Baie St. Paul.

Horses were not so important to the farmer as cattle, for the latter supplied not only beef and butter, but also most of the draft animals of the farm. Some horses were used to plough and cart, but most were kept for riding and driving. Even the Red River farmer, it was noted, would not walk a hundred yards if he had a horse to ride. But it was to the *métis*, of course, that the horse was indispensable, both as a pony to draw the cart and as the trained and highly valued buffalo-runner. The *métis* as a horseman was, indeed, quite as expert as the Mexican cowboy and not far short of the plains Indian. The first horses of the North-West seem to have been brought from the south-west by La Vérendrye's sons about 1740. They were therefore Indian horses, the mustangs or bronchoes descended from the mounts of the *conquistadores*. No other blood seems to have been imported until the famous stallion Fireaway was brought into the Colony from England in 1831, together with some mares from the United States.¹ Fireaway was an English hackney, "a splendid bright bay, standing 16 hands and very stoutly built, with a faultless shape. He was warranted to trot 15 miles an hour and could do much better".² Fireaway's progeny were known and prized, as does not seem to have been true of those of the thoroughbred stallion Melbourne, imported in 1848. Sir George Simpson, wishing to provide mounts when the native auxiliary force was being discussed as a means of strengthening the garrison of regular troops, had ordered a stallion and mare in foal. Both were sent out with a groom in 1848,³ but the mare died in 1850. Simpson had also had mares driven down from Saskatchewan for breeding, but the venture was not a success,⁴ and Melbourne never achieved the popularity of Fireaway. In the Settlement the better-bred horses were used for pleasure and display ; the drive to church in carriage or cart ; the drives and the trotting races on the ice of the river, horse and equipage gay with the jingle of bells ; the running races on the plains behind Upper Fort Garry in spring or early summer before the hunt went out, in which many of Fireaway's progeny made their name. But though some good blood was desirable in a buffalo-runner it was the shaggy pony of native stock who served the *métis* on hunt and trip.

Sheep also had been introduced into Red River, notably in a great drive from Kentucky in 1833, with high hopes of finding in wool the

¹ Ross, *Red River Settlement*, p. 134.

² H.B.C. Arch., Typewritten Copy No. 6, "Journal of the Late Chief Factor Robert Campbell", p. 20.

³ A.1/65, Minutes of Governor and Committee, May 10, 1848 ; A.6/27, Governor and Committee to Simpson, June 3, 1848.

⁴ See pp. 218, 245.

much talked of export staple other than fur. While enough were imported on that and other occasions to form the nucleus of large flocks, the hopes had not been realized. The hard winters, the wolves and the lack of skilful shepherds, made sheep raising of little profit, and the small flocks kept by some farmers in 1850 were kept to furnish wool for the women to spin and weave. While much cloth was imported, many a farmer and farmer lad went clad in hodden grey.¹ But the Red River valley, as those who kept cattle had discovered, was not natural pastoral country, and could not be another New South Wales for sheep any more than it could be a Texas for cattle ; a five-month winter forbade.

Swine and poultry were common in the yards of the steady farmers, but taken for granted and seldom mentioned in the records. Apparently little bacon or ham was cured ; at least none was ordered for the fur trade. Some eggs were daringly shipped to the northern posts, but to attempt the transport of eggs, even packed in casks, by boat over North-West portages, was to allow hope to prevail over common sense.

Red River farming, then, was what a later generation would call "mixed" farming. A great part of the labour on the farm went into the care of stock and the providing of feed for it. Hay was a constant pre-occupation of the Red River husbandmen, because it was always in short supply, surprising as that may seem of a colony on the verge of one of the world's great grasslands. Little tame hay of course was grown ; the main supply was the natural growth of the plains. Each farmer could count on what his lot and the two mile hay privilege would yield after the summer pasture of the cattle had been provided. This he mowed when he thought fit and his other work allowed. If he required more, he had recourse to the plains. Competition for the hay of the wild lands behind the hay privilege had become so intense that as early as 1839 the Council of Assiniboia referred to existing regulations governing the cutting of hay on the plains.² In 1850 the law was that no one could cut hay beyond the hay privilege before July 20 without forfeiting the hay of his hay-privilege ; all privileges were to be thrown open on September 1.³ On August 31, one of the annual occasions of Red River life, the families of hay-makers moved out to the plains and set up their tents by some already spied-out patch of good hay, and made ready for the morrow. In the morning when the dew had dried, the men cut a circle around the patch which thereupon was theirs by custom. Then in company with the other bands

¹ London, P.R.O., W.O., 33/21, Crofton, "A Report on the Colony of Red River . . .", p. 17.

² Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 291.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

of hay-makers scattered across the plain, the sickle and scythemen struck down the rank prairie grass, and the women and children raked and coiled the quick-drying hay in the searing August sun.¹ It was stacked on the spot, safe in the dry climate until the prairie grasses dried in the late fall and the fires began to run. Then it had to be carted home to the comparative safety of the river lots. It was the prairie fires, with the slow labour of sickle and scythe, and the not-infrequent dry summers, which must be supposed to explain the usual shortage of hay in Red River.

If haying was part festival and part hard labour, the Red River "sugaring" partook more of the nature of the former. In late March and early April the quick, thin sap of the ash-leaved maple (*acer negundo*) began to rise. Then many Red River farmers and *métis*, probably following a practice brought in from Canada by the Ojibways and the French, went off to the sugar camps. Sugar Point on the Red just above the Indian Settlement was one place rich in maples, and the *Rivière des islets de bois* on the plains to the south-west was another. The sugar made was not equal to that of the sugar maple of Canada, but it was sweet and helped eke out the costly refined sugar imported by York. No mention of maple syrup has been noted.²

The trips to the hay meadows and the sugar camps were regulated by the seasons, but those to the mills for grist by need and the wind. Red River in 1849, as noted, had twenty mills, all of them windmills but two. Thus had the growth of the Colony multiplied the only mill of 1825, that on Point Douglas owned by Robert Logan.³ When the wind set the sails of these picturesque giants revolving after a windless spell, the carts could be seen hurrying from the farmsteads, all anxious not to miss the grist.⁴ In them the flour for the coarse bread and plain bannocks of Red River was ground, for the *galettes* of the tripmen and hunters, and the more varied uses of the northern posts. For, despite the difficulties and backwardness of Red River farming, flour was sold to the fur trade, and the demand of the Colony and the trade was sometimes more than the small and sloven farms of Red River could supply. A dry season, a failure of the hunt, a considerable addition to the population, such as that of a body of troops, rarely failed to create a shortage of wheat, against

¹ Macbeth, "Farm Life in the Selkirk Colony", p. 4.

² The references to Red River sugaring are fugitive but numerous; see Coues, *New Light*, I, 172; P.A.M., Journal of Peter Garrioch, III, 175-7; MacLeod, "Manitoba Maple Sugar", pp. 10-13.

³ For a biography see *H.B.S.*, II, 228-9.

⁴ See the amusing description by Alexander Ramsey in his address (undated) to the Minnesota Agricultural Society.

which the Company had to guard by keeping a two-year supply in store.

There was little other use for grain than flour and feed. Some barley was malted for the home-brewing of beer, partly for domestic use and partly for illicit sale to the Indians. Attempts to establish a distillery had been made in 1843 and subsequent years by the Council of Assiniboia, as a way of furnishing a market for grain and especially as a means of combating the illicit import and sale of liquor to the Indians.¹ But no private individuals would undertake the enterprise ; when the Company itself built a distillery, the Governor and Committee forbade its operation by the Company, saying it was for the Council of Assiniboia to operate a public distillery. Here the matter stayed ; the distillery built at the Lower Fort was never operated, and this additional use for Red River grain was not developed.² Thus Red River agriculture, limited by its own primitive methods, was further retarded by an uncertain demand. The Company's policy of maintaining a reserve, necessary and humane as it was, of course operated to regulate and depress the market. Over and above these checks, there was the competition of the produce of the plains, the pemmican and dried meat of the buffalo hunt.

V

One purpose of the founders of the Red River Colony had been to make it a source of provisions for the fur trade. But the flour and other commodities of Red River had never completely replaced the provisions imported from the British Isles or those furnished by the buffalo hunt. Even the Colony itself, which in its early years had been saved from starvation only by recourse to the buffalo hunt, still continued to use pemmican and dried meat, and the fall hunt of the buffalo was made to lay in a supply of fresh meat for the winter. It was, of course, the *métis* who relied most on plains provisions, but nearly all elements in the Colony used some, particularly in times of scarcity.

Had the Settlement had only itself to feed, perhaps this continued use of the produce of the buffalo hunt might have come to an end. But pemmican remained the staple food of the boat brigades of the northern trade and of any post which could obtain a supply. No other food was as portable, as durable and as nourishing. To supply it, then, gave the

¹ Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 308.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 316, 323 ; D.5/9, Duncan Finlayson to Simpson, December 28, 1843 ; D.5/14, Christie to Simpson, July 28, 1845 ; D.5/28, Governor and Committee to Simpson, April 10, 1850.

buffalo hunters a steady occupation. But it was an occupation which kept them semi-nomads, dependent on the plains, and therefore kept half the Colony so, and the whole to a greater or less extent involved in the barbarous life of the plains. Nor was the Company less involved. Without the pemmican it would have been next to impossible to despatch the brigades over the long summer waterways. The hunt, however, was even more uncertain than the crops. In some years the herds were quickly and easily found, in others only after weeks of search in small bands far out on the plains. Nor did the hunters alone suffer the consequences of this uncertainty. When they returned with full carts, the whole had to be bought, when with empty, the hunters had to be tided over the ensuing winter, for the *métis*, little more than the Indian, understood the law of supply and demand. Their wish was to sell all they could bring in at a fixed and customary price, and the Company had in large measure to conform to their wishes. For it was not safe to risk their discontent, as the *métis* were a force not to be controlled by the Company, the government of Assiniboia, or the other half of the Colony, all of which lacked the means to overawe the *métis* once aroused.

Other products of the hunt were less important. A considerable part of the meat slaughtered was not made into pemmican, but sold dried in large slabs, and was bought by both Company and colonists. It was apparently a stores provision, indefinitely durable if kept dry, and consumed as a last resort. Tongues, pickled on the plains in strong brine, were a great delicacy which commanded a high price and were much sought after. The hunt could be made the source of a considerable amount of tallow, much more than the local demand required. But when an attempt was made to export it in 1843, trouble developed, and tallow remained an unimportant product of the hunt, having only a limited use as grease at the posts and for candles in the Colony. The Company was also reluctant to buy the heavy buffalo robes for export by York to the limited market in Europe, and did so only to prevent American traders crossing the line to obtain them. But there was a growing market for robes in the United States, and the private trade in furs, which was breaking through the restraints of the Company's monopoly in 1850, was to have as its staple export to St. Paul the buffalo robes which were a by-product of the Red River fall hunt.

The source of the plains provisions and the robes were the buffalo herds which wandered on the plains to the southwest of Red River. At the beginning of the century, the dense herds had trampled the muddy banks of the Red and its western tributaries.¹ The original Red River

¹ Coues, *New Light*, I, 64 et passim.

hunt had had as its centre the fur posts at Pembina, where the river of that name enters the Red just south of the international boundary. At first the hunt was simply a matter of riding out from the posts when the herds were in sight. But as the buffalo began to shun the dangerous area—or as their numbers began to ebb—the hunters had to go farther west toward the Pembina escarpment and over its crest to the short grass plains of the second prairie steppe. As the hunt ranged farther, and as it became necessary to hunt not only for the fur posts but also for the Selkirk colonists, two new elements entered into the conduct of the hunt. One was the need for a means of transporting the meat back to Pembina ; the other was the need for defence against the Sioux, whose tribal hunting grounds the hunters were invading as they followed the buffalo herds.

The vehicle in which to transport the spoils of the hunt was found in the Red River cart. The origins of this cart have not been authoritatively established. The first record of a wheeled vehicle in the North-West occurs in the Journal of Alexander Henry the Younger ; in the entry for November 15, 1801, Henry describes carts in use at Pembina.¹ They were simply small wooden platforms mounted on an axle between two low and solid wooden wheels ; the use to which they were put was to haul meat from the plains. This, however, was not a Red River cart. Some time between that date and 1818–21, the years of the first Red River hunts organized as expeditions to the plains,² the true Red River cart made its appearance. What made it a vehicle admirably suited for transport on the plains was in the first place its wheels. These were five feet high, made wholly of wood, hub, spokes and felloes. The spokes angled out from the hub, so as to “dish” the wheel and greatly increase the stability of the cart. The axle was also of wood ; as it was kept dry, there was much friction in the hub, and the cart in motion shrieked like a lost soul. But a worn out axle, like any other part of the wheel except the hub, could be readily shaped with axe and draw-knife from wood carried in the cart or obtained from the trees fringing the prairie rivers. To the axle two wooden shafts were attached. A platform of boards or slabs was laid across them between the wheels, and around it a slender railing was erected to keep the load in position. This light conveyance, made wholly of local wood, rolled easily over the prairie sod ; its tall, dished wheels bore it up in the soft ground of the sloughs or the river bottoms ; at river crossings the wheels, removed and bound to the bottom of the cart, and covered with buffalo hide, made a raft-cum-boat in which even the mighty Saskatchewan could be crossed. The only material

¹ Ibid., p. 191.

² Giraud, *Le Métis Canadien* . . . , pp. 649–51.

other than wood ever used in the cart was *shaganappi*, green buffalo hide, bound wet around the rims of the wheels, and left to dry. It shrank to an iron hardness and served as a binding and long-wearing rim. *Shaganappi* was also used to bind fractures and as harness for the ponies.

Such was the Red River cart, without which the plains hunt would have been impossible, and which was also indispensable in Red River agriculture. The Red River hunt in motion was a caravan of carts moving in single file across the plains. As to origins, there can be little doubt. In the Highlands of Scotland in the eighteenth century, just such carts were in use, both Henry's platform on solid wooden wheels, and the tall wooden cart with spoked wheels.¹ The Red River cart, it would seem, was of Highland origin, perhaps modified by influences from Quebec.

Means of transport having been thus found, means of defence against the Sioux were to be found in organization and tactics. These, however, may be best described as part of a description of the great summer hunt. The *métis*, it is to be remembered, thought of themselves as a "nation", and the majority of them lived by the buffalo hunt. The hunt became, as it were, the institutional framework of the community. (They had another such framework in the riverside settlements of their Red River parishes, but the hunt was still the more formative of the two in 1850.) In June of each year it had been the custom for some thirty years for the individual hunter to obtain his "outfit", that is, the supplies for the hunt, from the Company or a private trader, to make ready his horses and carts, and move off with all but the oldest and youngest of his family to the rendezvous of the hunt. This at first had been at Pembina, where the hunt was organized and whence it moved out to the plains. Later the rendezvous was to the west in the Pembina valley, because the herds were now to be found farther out on the plains. In 1850 a further change was beginning to take place. The old settlement at Pembina, removed to White Horse Plain in 1824, was being renewed for reasons to be discussed below, and was to develop its own hunt. In Red River the *métis* were becoming so numerous that the summer hunt was becoming unwieldy. Two groups were forming, the "main river party" from the settlements along the Red, and the White Horse Plain party from the Assiniboine, each of which was to constitute a separate hunt. A new route to the buffalo plains was coming into use. The old one ran from a few miles up the Assiniboine across the plain south-west to the Pembina escarpment, and then to "the crossing" of the Pembina River. On the broad

¹ Graham, *Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, I, 166-7, 202. See also Knox, "Red River Cart", pp. 39-43: P.A.M., Rapport sur les missions du diocèse de Québec, 1853, Laffèche to his friends, September 4, 1851.

bottom lands of that great square-cut valley, the rendezvous was held. The new route was up the Assiniboine through the Sand Hills to the mouth of the Souris, by what was later to be known as the Yellow Quill Trail. Where the rendezvous was held is unknown.¹

At the rendezvous the *métis* made camp after their manner on the plains. The carts were arranged in a great circle, the shafts outwards. Inside were placed at night the buffalo-runners and the cart ponies, to prevent wandering, or theft by an Assiniboine or Cree horse thief, or stampede by a Sioux raid. Immediately outside the circle of carts the *tipis* were pitched, and there men, women, children and dogs lived until the rendezvous was complete and the hunt organized.

The organization of the hunt was discussed leisurely by the senior and eminent men while the stragglers came in. Then, when all was practically decided, a "chief", or president, and a council of twelve were elected, by the assembled hunters. Next "captains" were chosen, each being elected by hunters ranging themselves behind him up to the number of ten as their leader for the duration of the hunt. Each captain served in turn as officer of the day with his "soldiers" as camp police. A public crier and guides were also elected with the council. The president and council then adopted a set of regulations for the hunt, renewed but not necessarily changed from year to year, and proclaimed them through the camp. It was a democratic system, but the chief's authority was absolute on the march and during the running of the buffalo. Nor was it lightly to be challenged in camp. Any infraction of the regulations or of the chief's orders was promptly punished; serious disobedience met the ultimate punishment of being driven from the camp and turned loose on the plains.²

The origins of the organization of the buffalo hunt are unknown. Perhaps there was some memory of the captain of militia of New France in it, and perhaps a later dash of the democracy of Papineau's followers. Certainly it possessed a remarkable similarity to the organization of the "buffalo Indians" both in camp and on the hunt.³ Probably it was, like the *métis* themselves, of dual origin, both French and Indian,

¹ Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition* . . . , I, 179; Giraud, *Le Métis Canadien* . . . , pp. 802-03; Roe, *North American Buffalo*, pp. 376-7. On the fall hunt and its rendezvous, see Robinson, *Great Fur Land*, chapter VII; the date of his description is uncertain and its accuracy is perhaps doubtful.

² Ross, *Red River Settlement*, pp. 248-50.

³ Catlin, *Manners, Customs and Conditions of the North American Indians*, I, Letter No. 7.

and like so much in Red River history, it easily assumed a Scriptural appearance.

When the hunt was organized, the whole caravan of perhaps five hundred carts was set in motion towards the south-west. Scouts were sent riding over the horizon to find the herds and warn the chief of their whereabouts. Day by day the caravan marched behind the guide riding in front with the staff of the flag of the hunt fixed in his saddle, and night by night pitched camp where he planted the banner at the chief's orders. In 1850 the buffalo might still be encountered to the east of Turtle Mountain, but some years it was necessary to seek them far to the south in American territory ; occasionally the hunt failed, that is, the herds were beyond reach. When the scouts brought word that a herd had been sighted, camp was pitched at the nearest site. The buffalo-guns were taken from the carts, the left pocket of the coat filled with powder, the right with balls, the buffalo-runners mounted. Then the hunters rode out behind the chief, to approach the buffalo behind cover if possible. When they had approached as near as might be without alarming the herd, they filled their mouths with balls, and watched the chief. At his " Ho! " they charged the startled and stampeding beasts. Each man marked his kill, usually a young cow, and guided his runner to it. When that trained animal knew his rider's prey, the reins could be dropped on the neck and the horse left to bring the rider almost abreast the labouring buffalo. The hunter fired his gun across the saddle, aiming by the angle. If the cow went down, as it was almost sure to do, for these men could hit their mark at a gallop from one hundred yards, he guided his runner to a second victim, loading his gun the while by scooping a palmful of powder from his pocket, pouring it down the barrel, spitting a ball into the muzzle and striking the stock on his thigh to jar the charge home. (The saliva would hold the unwadded ball for the moment of aim, the guns only occasionally burst from the explosion of the loose charge.) Then the second beast was tumbled headlong, and the feat repeated until some half dozen lay in line across the prairie, or the hunt extended too far from camp. All this the buffalo-runner did amid the dust and thunder of the charge and stampede, the bellowing of the bulls, the thud of the guns and the yells of his fellows.¹

The carts then came up from the camp, and the hunters dismounted to skin and butcher their kill. The skin was quickly stripped off, the tongue, *dépouillé* and boss removed, long strips of meat cut from the

¹ Ross, *Red River Settlement*, pp. 255-7 ; also the Rev. G. A. Belcourt's description of the hunt in Major Woods' " Pembina Settlement ", pp. 44-52 ; and Palliser, *Solitary Rambles* . . . , pp. 111-14.

back and hindquarters, the hindquarter tendons removed, and the carcass left for the gathering coyotes. That night there was feasting in camp, and the next day and succeeding days the strips of meat dried in the prairie sun. When the meat was dried hard, it was pounded into a powdery meal, put in a sack of green buffalo hide, melted tallow was poured over it, the whole well mixed and the bag sewed up. The result was a ninety pound bag of pemmican, the product of one buffalo.

When after other runnings the carts were loaded with pemmican, dried meat, tongues and robes, the march back to the Settlement began. The hunt would arrive there in late August or early September after some three months on the plains. But all did not always go well. Sometimes, when the hunt was south of Turtle Mountain in the land of the Sioux, the Indian horsemen caught a scout and took his scalp. Sometimes the same whirling horsemen encircled a small party of *métis*. Then these wild men showed their plainscraft. Taking cover in a hollow of the prairie, they would scrape out rifle pits on the reverse slope, and if the Sioux ventured over the skyline, whether crawling through the grass or charging mounted in file, they were likely to regret their boldness. The same basic tactics of use of cover, a short field of fire on a reverse slope, made the *métis* camp proof against all Sioux attack. From among their cart wheels and in their rifle pits, the hunters could beat off both the glancing charge of the horsemen, or the stealthy approach of the night attack, as they were to do in a great battle of many hours duration in 1851.¹ No *métis* camp is known to have been overrun; no hunt ever lost more than a few scouts. To these masters of plains warfare the huddled stand of Custer on a hilltop must have seemed the height of tactical ineptitude.

This annual experience of self-government and their pride of supremacy over the Sioux did little, of course, to make the *métis* tractable denizens of Red River. In the absence of superior force, they could in fact be governed only by being humoured and left to the influence of their own chiefs and their priests.

When the summer hunt was home, the plains provisions were traded, the debt settled and the winter's goods bought. Many *métis* then began to prepare to pass the winter in the Settlement in a round of Masses and merry-making. But the active, or the unfortunate on the summer hunt, went out on the fall hunt in October to bring in fresh meat and robes made prime by the approach of winter. It was a smaller, less organized expedition than the summer hunt. To what extent the rigid discipline

¹ Giraud, *Le Métis Canadien* . . . , p. 827; D.5/32, J. Black to the Chief Factors and Chief Traders of the Northern Department, December 9, 1851.

of the latter was reproduced is not clear. But there seems to have been straggling, individual hunting and return by small parties, not as a body. Some would remain behind on the plains to "winter", that is, to hunt the buffalo for food and robes and to trap wolves and other furbearers. With the growing development of the trade in robes to St. Paul, these "winterers" were to become a large and important part of the *métis* "nation", and their increase was a set-back to what progress their people had made in the adoption of a settled mode of life.

Among the occupations of Red River and the sources of its food, the fisheries played a small but not unimportant part. Like the fall hunt, they were a means by which the improvident or the unfortunate made some provision for the winter. The waters of the Red and Assiniboine were, of course, available to anyone who wished to try his luck and vary his diet, and yielded catfish, pickerel, pike, goldeyes and sturgeon in abundance. But the fall fisheries were two. One was at Grand Marais on Lake Winnipeg, and was reached by boat or by trails down the east side of the delta. This fishery was used by the Swampies of the Indian village, and the half-breeds and *métis* of the Lower and the Upper Settlements. It was a whitefish fishery and the fish taken by net there were cured, as in the north, by being hung entire, head downwards, to drain and dry in the cool October air. So treated, they kept until the frosts came. The second fishery was at Oak Point on Lake Manitoba, near where a settlement of *métis* to be known as St. Laurent was soon to begin. There pickerel, pike and tullibees were netted and dried to form the winter staple of the poorer *métis* from White Horse Plain. In the years of scarcity the fall fisheries became a serious enterprise indeed, being, with the rabbits of the poplar bluffs, the last resources of the needy *métis* and the Indians. The mode of winter fishing under the ice, as practised in the north, seems to have been used only on Lake Manitoba.

VI

Not all those in Red River who shunned the drudgery of the farm were hunters or fishermen. Some engaged themselves as tripmen and "made their debt" with the Company or a private trader as boatmen, in the brigades of boats which carried the goods and furs of the trade in the season of open water. Early in June the boat brigades left Upper, or Lower, Fort Garry. A brigade was four to six boats in charge of a guide. One set of brigades was that of the Portage la Loche, or Methy Portage, over the height of land between the Saskatchewan and the Athabaska.

It made its way to the Saskatchewan with the outfits made up at Fort Garry for the Athabaska and Mackenzie River districts. At the Portage, which was reached in August, they exchanged their outfits for the outcoming cargoes of furs, and made their way back to Norway House. There some of the boats picked up goods for Red River and returned. The others took the furs down to York, and loaded there with goods for Norway House and Red River. They made their way up the chilling rivers as the days shortened, to reach Fort Garry in October just before the freeze up. The other set of brigades were the York, or fall brigades, which later in the season carried the furs of the Red River and Rainy Lake districts to York, and returned with goods for Norway House and Red River.

There were also private freighters, who carried their own goods and those of the Company on contract. Much of the freighting to Norway House and York Factory was done by such men, Andrew McDermot,¹ James Sinclair,² Edward Mowat, William Inkster³ and Thomas Sinclair,⁴ to name only the more prominent. But the long and arduous trip to Portage la Loche was always performed by the Company's own brigades and the turbulent tripmen whom it took all the authority of the veteran guides, Aléxis Espérance and Baptiste Bruce,⁵ to control.

The tripmen's season was one of steady toil at the oars, heavy strain at the portages, and some danger in the rapids. The boats were the York boats, named from York Factory and adapted from an Orkney boat of Viking origin. After 1821 they to a large extent replaced the canoe in the transport of goods in the North-West. The York boat's measurements were at least 24 feet in keel, with stem and stern raking fore and aft each a further 6 feet to make an overall length of 34 feet ; by 1850 the measurements were sometimes a 30-foot keel and an overall length of 42 feet. The beam was 9 feet amidships, the depth 3 feet. It was clinker built, with spruce timbers and planking, the building being mostly done at Norway House. The life of a boat was about two trips to Portage la Loche followed by two or three to York. They were propelled by oars, or sweeps, in still water or a steady current, the men

¹ Andrew McDermot (1789-1881). See p. lvi. For an outline of his public work in the Settlement see Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 62.

² See p. lvi.

³ See Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 72.

⁴ He was a brother of James Sinclair. For an outline of his public work in Red River see Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 68.

⁵ Aléxis Boname l'Espérance ; see Morice, *Dictionnaire historique*, p. 185 ; *H.B.S.*, XVI, 122, n. 2. Baptiste Bruce, *H.B.S.*, XVI, p. 353.

rising to swing the oar and falling back on the seat with the stroke. In fast water the boat was poled, or tracked with a line. If the wind was astern a mast was stepped and a square sail raised, and the oarsmen knew what it was to rest. At the portages the great hulls were tracked through the rapids or pushed on rollers overland. Slow and heavy as they seemed after the north canoe, the York boats endured the racking of the portages and the tracking better than the canoe, and carried more cargo with fewer men, a cargo of from three to three and one half tons. In short, if less picturesque, the York boat was more economical, and the canoe in 1850 was used only for expresses.¹

The crew was made up of a bowsman, a steersman and six middlemen. Of these some were *métis* and some half-breed. They were the hardest characters in Red River, in perpetual debt, given to heavy drinking on leaving and returning, to drinking bouts and fights with other crews at Norway House and York. They were lawless and not always to be held to their contracts. But they performed the stern labour of their calling season after season, and boasted of their prowess. Without their endurance, the whole structure of the fur trade would have fallen apart.²

The boatmen in 1850 were being joined by a new kind of tripman, those who went with the private traders' cart brigades over the plains to St. Peter's. As 4 to 6 boats made a brigade, so did 4 to 6 carts, each pony or ox being tied to the tail of the cart ahead and all being under the charge of one driver. The cart brigades were only beginning in 1850, but by the end of the decade, their trails would be worn deep by four different routes to St. Peter's and westward by the Saskatchewan trail to Carlton House and Edmonton. They carried the goods and furs of the free traders at first, but soon the Company was to use them to supplement its imports from York and the freighting by boat on the Saskatchewan. By this new calling the seasonal rhythm of Red River life was intensified and made more than ever a matter of summer flow to the plains and winter ebb to the riverside dwellings of the Settlement.

VII

The despatch of the boat brigades was perhaps the principal function of the Hudson's Bay Company's establishments at Red River. The collection of provisions, the preparation of outfits and their despatch to the North-West was the purpose of the maintenance of those establishments.

¹ Glover, "York Boats", pp. 19-23.

² Gunn, *Echoes of the Red*, Chapter III.

A provisions depot Fort Garry had always been, but it shared with York Factory and Norway House their roles as goods warehouses and accounting offices. The officers and clerks of Upper Fort Garry, aided to some extent by the small staff of the Lower Fort, were busy the year round in engaging tripmen, outfitting the plains hunters, buying plains provisions, filling the requisitions of the northern posts, sending off and receiving the brigades, and keeping account of all these transactions in journal and ledger. The Settlement was an organic part of the fur trade of the North-West, and it was the two forts which articulated it with the trade.

The white-walled forts, however, were not only main offices and depots of the fur trade ; they were also shops in which much of the local trade of the Settlement was carried on. In them the Company bought the agricultural produce of the settlers, and sold them dry goods, hardware and provisions of all kinds, from imported tea to the dried meat of the plains. It was no doubt incongruous that the same corporation should play the part at once of governor and grocer in Red River. So it was, however, an illustration of the anomalies arising from the growth of a civilized community under the rule of a commercial corporation organized to conduct a barter trade in the wilderness.

Nor did their functions as outfitting depots and local stores free the Company's establishments in Red River from the ordinary duties of a trading post. Furs were brought in to trade at Fort Garry by the buffalo-hunters, the winterers, and the local *métis*, half-breeds and Indians. The returns from the Red River District were not inconsiderable, especially in the years when muskrats were plentiful, and in 1850 were perhaps as great as ever they had been.¹ Within the District were subordinate posts, one at Lake Manitoba and one on the Red at the boundary just north of Pembina. For six years past the Red River District had been, with the Rainy Lake District to the east, a border district where the trade was competitive, and from Rainy Lake by Pembina to Turtle Mountain and Lake Manitoba ran a zone where the Company strove with American rivals for furs with almost the fierceness of the days of competition with the North West Company.

Had this been a straight and simple fight between the Company and its competitors across the border it might well have ended quickly. But the beginning of competition at the border, by driving up the price of furs and offering an alternative market within easy reach, touched off an outburst of private trading in furs within the Red River District. Such trade was contrary to the Charter and illegal. The result was to bring to a head a

¹ This statement rests on a general impression ; no figures, admitting of exact comparisons, have been found.

development long in train in the Red River Settlement. The increase of population and of agricultural production, the beginning of private trade in other goods than furs, the accumulation of private capital, the need for new exports and new enterprises, had made it difficult for the Company to maintain its commercial monopoly by the exertion of its governmental powers. Discontent had been expressed by the private traders of the Settlement ; it was now echoed by the half-breeds and the *métis*, and soon the Company's right to the exclusive trade in furs was challenged.

Once a colony had been established in Rupert's Land, its presence raised the question whether the Company's monopoly under the Charter meant that only the Company could buy and sell goods of any description within that colony. When in 1822 the Chief Factor in Red River ruled that that was so, there was an outburst of protest from the colonists. Governor George Simpson soothed the discontent and the Governor and Committee decided that private individuals might trade in goods other than furs and leather.¹ Thus the Company in fact retained only the monopoly of the fur trade in Red River, although it also continued to sell imported goods as before. But some "petty traders" availed themselves of the Company's toleration, and began to import goods in the Company's ships by York Factory and to sell them from shops in Red River. As they offered a wider variety of goods than the staples offered by the Company, they at once found a place for themselves in the trade of the Colony.

One or two, however, traded more extensively, Andrew McDermot especially, perhaps Alexander Ross, and later James Sinclair. On occasion McDermot and Sinclair traded for furs under special licence of Governor Simpson. One such occasion was in the trade at Pembina in 1824, when the purpose was to drive an American trader out of the region.² This was done by McDermot, and there were other instances of such fighting of fire with fire, particularly on the Souris River, which was within range of the American traders on the Missouri.³ The use of these licences was, it would seem, continued, James Sinclair being granted one as well as McDermot.⁴ McDermot also travelled with the buffalo hunts, and it is hard to believe that he received for his goods payments

¹ A.6/20, fos. 109-111d., Governor and Committee to Simpson, May 21, 1823.

² D.5/15, A. McDermot to Christie, November 13, 1845 (enclosure to letter from Christie to Simpson, December 31, 1845); D.5/17, James Sinclair to Simpson, June 4, 1846.

³ MacLeod, "Cuthbert Grant of Grantown", pp. 35-6.

⁴ D.5/21, Sir J. H. Pelly to Simpson, January 28, 1848.

exclusively in plains provisions. In short, some petty traders traded for furs, and this was tolerated, but not publicly approved, by the Company's officers. Such a discreet private trade in furs might be tolerated, might even be useful to the Company, but only so long as the furs were sold by the traders to the Company. Similarly, the entry of the private traders into the business of freighting enabled the Company to rid itself in part of a risky and troublesome undertaking. Thus there was a place for private enterprise in the Settlement. The Company could use and even encourage the services of the private traders, provided they did not compete with the Company by buying furs for export on their own account. Just that, however, had begun in 1844 with the arrival of one Norman W. Kittson¹ of St. Peter's at Pembina, and not only petty traders but the half-breeds and *métis* had been drawn into this illicit trade. When efforts were made to stop it, the Charter and the government of the Company were attacked and complaints forwarded to England. Nor had the Company's resistance to the violation of its chartered rights been wholly successful. Thus in 1850 the Company's officers were watching with misgivings the growth of a free trade in furs in the Red River District, and private traders, with the *métis* and half-breeds, were feeling their way cautiously towards exploiting the new opportunities for profit.

VIII

By 1850, indeed, it was becoming clear that there was little possibility of the Company being able to put a stop to the private trade in furs. Authority over Rupert's Land was vested by the Charter in the Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay, and was exercised by the Governor and Committee of the Company; and Assiniboia was a colony under that authority. The Charter was held by grant from the Crown originally and by right of one hundred and eighty years of uncontested enjoyment, but the relationship of the Company as a colonial government to the Imperial Government of 1850 was not clear. Rupert's Land was a possession of the Crown, like Canada or New South Wales, and Parliament might legislate, and on occasion had legislated, for it. But the Colonial Office did not attempt to exercise any regular jurisdiction over the Company's territories, and no definite relationship had been

¹ Norman W. Kittson (1812?-88), Canadian by birth; trader with American Fur Company; in 1843 made manager of its Northern Department. See p. lv, and for a description of his post at Pembina in September 1851, see Bond, *Minnesota and its Resources . . .*, p. 274 et seq.

established between the Company and the Colonial Office. Under the authority of the Governor and Committee of the Company, the Governor and Council of Rupert's Land administered the fur trade and might legislate generally for the District of Assiniboia, a subordinate part of Rupert's Land. Normally, however, the executive and legislative government of Assiniboia was left to its own Governor and Council.

The two made up a simple and comparatively undifferentiated government, not unlike a county or municipal council. The Governor from 1823 to 1848 had always been a commissioned officer of the Company, but until 1835 the situation had been regulated by Governor George Simpson's official, if intermittent, residence in Red River. When he began to spend his winters at Lachine, the resident Chief Factor was the only Governor in the Colony, except for Simpson's summer visits, a situation the colonists disliked. But the presence of the Imperial officers commanding regular troops in Red River from 1846 to 1848¹ had afforded an opportunity of vesting the governorship of Assiniboia in some one other than an officer of the Company. Sir George Simpson, writing from Red River in 1846 had advised that the commanding officer be made Governor of Assiniboia :

"The future government of this Settlement is, likewise, an object requiring early & very serious consideration. The Governor ought to be constantly resident here, so that a distinct Governor for the district of Assiniboia will always be necessary, as the Governor in Chief of the Company's Territories, or their principal representative in North America, cd. not possibly give the necessary attention to his extensive charge if confined to Red River Settlement. There has long been a great objection on the part of the settlers to the Governor of Assiniboia being a member of the Fur Trade, as his interests if they do not really bias his conduct, are believed to do so, inducing a distrust in all his actions."²

The Governor and Committee assented. But Major (later Colonel) Crofton, who brought the Sixth Regiment of Foot to Assiniboia via York Factory in summer 1846, did not wish to remain in the Colony.³ His successor in command, Major J. T. Griffiths, travelled out from England with Simpson in 1847. But although Simpson had recommended that Crofton's successor in command should be made Governor of the Colony,⁴ and the Governor and Committee had appointed Griffiths a

¹ For which see p. lxvi, et seq., *infra*.

² D.4/68, Simpson to the Governor and Committee, July 23, 1846.

³ D.4/68, fo. 180.

⁴ *Ibid.*, fo. 180-180d.

Councillor of Assiniboia¹ and had given Simpson a commission for him as Governor of the Colony,² Griffiths never held that office. The Governor and Committee had told Simpson to use the commission, and to make Griffiths Governor, only if Alexander Christie insisted on retiring both from the fur trade and from the governorship. During their journey from England, Simpson decided that Griffiths was "altogether disqualified, as well from inaptitude for business as from temper"³ for the governorship. So Christie was persuaded to continue in office,⁴ and although the proposal to make the officer in command of the troops Governor of the Colony was kept under discussion, it was not given effect until 1848, when Major W. B. Caldwell,⁵ commanding officer of the garrison of out-pensioners, became Governor of Assiniboia, at the nomination of the Colonial Office, with a commission from the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, as the Crown was not free to grant him one in a charter colony.⁶ The administration of the Colony was thus separated as far as possible from that of the Company, as it had not been before. But in circumstances where prestige and influence were nine-tenths of authority, Governor Caldwell would have needed outstanding personal qualities to overcome the fact that he did not possess either the prestige of a commissioned officer of the Company, or the commercial patronage the Company had to bestow. In Red River the Company was ever present, and the Imperial Government, never directly represented, was remote and unfamiliar.

As Governor, Caldwell was president of the Council of Assiniboia.

¹ A.6/27, fo. 86.

² A.6/27, fo. 87; A.1/65, fo. 33.

³ D.4/69, pp. 137, 139.

⁴ D.4/69, p. 227; D.5/20.

⁵ William Bletterman Caldwell (fl. 1814-57). He obtained a commission as an ensign in the 60th (or Royal American) Regiment of Foot on September 29, 1814, and later transferred to the 99th Regiment of Foot. He became a lieutenant on October 28, 1824, and a captain on December 9, 1831. Caldwell entered the 92nd (Highland) Regiment of Foot in 1837. He attained the rank of major in 1846, and that of lieutenant-colonel in 1855, the year in which he returned from the Red River Settlement to England. His evidence taken in 1857 before the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company (*Report*, 1857, pp. 298-312) outlines his connection with the Red River Settlement.

⁶ A.11/95, Caldwell to Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies, March 22, 1849 (enclosure to letter from Caldwell to Governor and Committee, Upper Fort Garry, March 28, 1849); London, P.R.O., C[olonial] O[ffice], 42/608, Caldwell to H. Merivale, March 31, 1856.

In 1850 this consisted of the Recorder, Adam Thom,¹ the Anglican bishop, Most Rev. David Anderson,² and the Roman Catholic, Monsignor J. N. Provencher, Father Louis Lafèche,³ Rev. William Cockran and Rev. J. Smithurst,⁴ Cuthbert Grant, the Warden of the Plains, and five other senior men, magistrates and men of influence from the Scots and half-breed communities.⁵ The Council was a body from which the Governor might seek advice, but its chief function was to pass by-laws which regulated the local affairs of the Settlement. The Governor also presided at the sessions of the General Court, although the conduct of cases was in the hands of the law officer of the District, Recorder Thom. The rest of the bench was made up of magistrates of the District, and as these were also Councillors, the General Court was in effect pretty much the Council in judicial session. The laws administered were those of England, Imperial statutes applying to the colonies, and the by-laws of Assiniboia. Minor cases were dealt with by the resident magistrates in the settlements, sitting alone or in petty sessions. In maintaining order and administering the laws, the courts were assisted by a Sheriff, Alexander Ross, and some constables, of an authorized number of nine in 1850. As an aid to the civil power, fifty-six out-pensioners had been sent out in 1848, and a second body of twenty followed in 1850, both parties being accompanied by wives and children. These pensioned soldiers were under the command of Major W. B. Caldwell and his second-in-command,

¹ See p. lx and Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 63-4, and Wallace, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, II, 661.

² The Rev. David Anderson (1814-85) was consecrated Bishop of the newly-established diocese of Rupert's Land on May 29, 1849. He arrived in Red River on October 3, 1849, and except for a period in 1856-57, which he spent in England, he continued in office until he resigned in 1864. He returned to England and was appointed Vicar of Clifton, and later Chancellor of St. Paul's Cathedral. His evidence given before the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company will be found in the *Report* (1857), pp. 231-47. Anderson was the author of *The Net in the Bay* and *Notes of the Flood at The Red River, 1852*. See also Wallace, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, I, 12, and Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 65.

³ The Rev. Louis F. R. Lafèche (1818-98), who came west in 1844. He was later Bishop of Three Rivers. See Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, p. 66.

⁴ The Rev. John Smithurst of the Church Missionary Society, who came to the parish of St. Peter's (called also the Indian Settlement) in 1839. He returned to England in 1851 (H.B.C. Arch. A.12/5, fo. 498^a). See *The Beaver*, September 1936, M. MacLeod, "The Lamp Shines in Red River", pp. 41-5, 65-6.

⁵ Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 358-9.

Captain C. V. Foss,¹ and had been, or were being, settled on small holdings along the Assiniboine west from Upper Fort Garry. Unfortunately, neither their numbers, nor the impression they made, did much to suggest that they would be of great assistance to the civil power.

In the ordinary course of events, happily, there had been little need of police or military in Red River. Some of the credit for this must be given to the missionary clergy. First of these had been the Most Rev. J. N. Provencher of the Church of Rome, Bishop of Juliopolis *in partibus infidelium* since 1822, and of the North-West since 1847. Invited to come to Red River by Selkirk, and thereafter assisted by the Company, Provencher and his clergy resident in the Colony, Rev. L. F. R. Laflèche, Rev. J. B. Thibault,² Rev. G. A. Belcourt³ and Father Pierre Aubert,⁴ O.M.I., had brought the *métis* to the faith, followed them on the hunt and encouraged them to settle in the Colony. Their influence over the wild, but spiritually docile *métis* was great, and was used to keep them respectful of government and the courts. There had been one exception to this, Rev. G. A. Belcourt, who had aided and abetted the free traders in 1844-46, and who was in 1850 engaged in founding a mission among the *métis* attracted to the American trading post at Pembina. But the clergy in Red River were pursuing their patient work of civilizing their restless charges. In the mission school at St. Boniface Cathedral, the

¹ Christopher Vaughan Foss, ensign in the 2nd West India Regiment of Foot, 1834; lieutenant, 1838; in 1839 he transferred to the 18th (Royal Irish) Regiment of Foot; sold out in 1841 or 1842; given "a commission in the Militia when formed", i.e., in Red River, and shown in *Army List* made up to April 1, 1849, as captain (local rank) and staff officer of the Pensioners in Hudson Bay. Said by Caldwell to be a married man with three children (D.5/23, Caldwell to Simpson, November 29, 1848). Shown in *Army List* to December 30, 1852, as captain (local rank) and staff officer to Pensioners in Western Australia.

² Jean Baptiste Thibault (1810-79) came to Red River in 1833 as a missionary. See Morice, *L'Eglise Catholique* . . . , I, chapter IV.

³ Georges Antoine Belcourt (1803-74) was ordained a priest of the Roman Catholic Church in 1827 and came to the West in the early 1830's. See Wallace, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, I, 40. Alexander Ross (*Red River Settlement*, p. 286) referred to Belcourt as "a man of active habits, intelligence, and enterprise; and . . . the advantage of understanding and conversing with the natives, without the aid of an interpreter".

⁴ Father Pierre Aubert (1814-90), came in 1845, the first of the Oblate fathers; returned to Canada in 1851, as Bishop of Ottawa; to France in 1857 (Morice, *L'Eglise Catholique* . . . , I, chapter IV).

promising row of Canadians and men were taught their catechism and the creed, and in the common school of the Gore Navy, founded in 1822, Canadian and white girls were taught to read and write, cook and sew, with other arts of civilization. The result was that there were in French Red River families reared to a gentle and religious life despite the surrounding barbarism. The work was now well advanced, and the Church was extending its mission to the Subarctic and the Arctic.¹

Across the Red, the Church of England, through the Church Missionary Society, had founded mission churches and schools since the coming of Rev. John West in 1817. While there had been constant in care of the *Sect of Xherons*, the other settlements along the Red and the Indian Village, it had proved possible after 1841 to begin Indian missions at Fort Chip and at The Pas.² Then in 1842 the *Sect of Rupert's Land* had been created and Rev. David Anderson made Bishop. The Bishop had reached Red River in the same year, and his clergy in 1851 numbered seven, Rev. William Cockburn, Rev. John Chapman,³ Rev. Robert James,⁴ Rev. J. Smithson, and Rev. Robert Hunt,⁵ with Rev. A. Cowley⁶ at Fort Chip and Rev. J. Hunter⁷ at The Pas. The Bishop and his clergy in the Settlement had four churches under their care, the Red River

¹ *Ibid.*

² The Rev. John West, M.A. (1771-1841) of the Church of England, who came to Red River in 1817 in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company. See Wallace, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, VI, 701, and Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 27-8.

³ Morrison, *Journal of the Furber of Montreal*, pp. 120-12.

⁴ The Rev. John Chapman, who had come to Red River as Bishop Anderson's chaplain in 1842. According to 40-20, 41-20, Chapman was appointed to succeed the Rev. William Cockburn as a deputy of £120 per annum in 1851.

⁵ The Rev. Robert James of the Church Missionary Society and his wife came to Red River in 1840. They returned to England in 1841.

⁶ Robert Hunt of the Church Missionary Society and his wife came to Red River from England with the Bishop of Rupert's Land in 1842. Hunt's mission was at Lac la Ponge.

⁷ The Rev. Jonathan Cowley of the Church Missionary Society, who came to the country in 1841 in company with the Rev. William Cockburn. In 1851 he was in charge of the mission at Fort Chipewyng (Fort Chipewy, Lake Winnipeg). See Ross, *Red River Settlements*, pp. 201-2; Hargrave, *Red River*, pp. 107, 111, 113, and MacLeod, *Letters of Louisa Hargrave*, pp. 106, 120, 171.

⁸ The Rev. James Hunter (1817-87) of the Church Missionary Society who went to The Pas in 1844. See pp. 173, 175, Wallace, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, I, 109, and MacLeod, *Letters of Louisa Hargrave*, p. 165.

Academy of the late Rev. John Macallum,¹ just made St. John's College, and eight parish schools under their supervision. There was need for new churches and schools, and the Bishop was resolved that the Indian missions should be increased.²

Like the economic life of the Settlement, the religious life of Red River had taken on a new vigour and was expanding. The Presbyterian Scots of Kildonan were taking part in the new movement. They had first been stirred by newly arrived Church of England missionaries protesting in 1841 against the modifications of the Liturgy which had been made for the sake of the Presbyterians. They then had received a visit from Rev. A. Barnard of the Presbyterian mission at Red Lake, Michigan Territory in 1843.³ In 1844 a committee of Presbyterians headed by Alexander Ross, had petitioned the Governor and Committee to provide them with a minister of their own church.⁴ The Governor and Committee had denied any obligation to do so,⁵ and the petitioners then turned to the Free Kirk of Scotland to help them. This the Kirk had found impossible, but they were referred to the Presbyterian Church of Canada, where in 1850 Rev. Robert Burns was looking for a minister willing to accept a call to Red River. And one was shortly to be found.⁶

It was to the work and influence of the clergy that the general peace and order of the Colony is to be ascribed in large degree. But the gentle and flexible restraints of precept and example could not prevent any considerable group doing what it was resolved to do. And the churches, like the rest of the Colony were entering on a new growth which would also help to make it impossible that the Red River Settlement should remain wholly subordinate to needs and limitations of the regime of the fur trade.

¹ The Rev. John Macallum who died in 1849. See Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 63, and Macleod, *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*, passim.

² Tucker, *Rainbow in the North*, pp. 207-08.

³ P.A.M., "Red River Settlement, Sketch of Visit to Red River Settlement", by the Rev. A. Barnard.

⁴ D.5/11, A. Ross et al. to the Governor and Committee, June 10, 1844 (enclosure to letter from the same to Simpson, June 10, 1844); D.5/12, A. Ross, R. Logan and James Sinclair to Simpson, August 5, 1844.

⁵ Ross, *Red River Settlement*, p. 351.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 346-51; the original letters are in P.A.M., Ross Papers.

IX

Such was the Red River Settlement. It was not, however, an immobile society, stuck fast in the rut of custom. The small Colony in the vast plain was entering a new stage of growth in 1850, a state the letters of Eden Colville were to illustrate. What were the factors which were producing the change?

The first was a demand for a market for the agricultural produce of the Colony, both for what was actually produced in the years of abundance, and what it was assumed might be produced if a market were available. There can be little doubt that discontent on this score, even if felt only by a few private traders and progressive farmers, was a definite cause of the changes occurring in Red River before and during 1850-52.¹ And there were actual gluts of wheat in years of good crops, and low prices when good crops happened to coincide with good hunts. But the assumption that Red River agriculture as it was could produce a surplus to meet any considerable demand was probably an illusion. It was from the cultivation of the plains, made possible by a transformation of agricultural practices, that the wheat crops of the future were to come. Red River agriculture was a river-front agriculture incapable of cultivating the lands to the rear. And, in fact, the recurrent gluts and shortages of Red River history were not to end until the farming of the plains began with the immigration after 1870 of a new population of farmers equipped with the machinery and agricultural skills of their day.²

If the discontent at the want of a market for the produce of the farms arose in part at least from an illusion, there was, however, no illusion about the uncertainty of Red River economy. Agriculture itself was subject to frost, flood and famine ; whether it was possible away from the river-front was doubted, and by some was denied. The buffalo hunts were also uncertain, their continuance even more so ; they could not, it was certain, last more than a term of years. The dwindling of the buffalo herds, made evident by their withdrawal westward, pointed to the inevitable ending of the hunts. Nor did trade in goods offer an alternative occupation. Within the Colony the opportunities for trade were few, and only sufficient to support four or five merchants in comparative wealth. No industry had succeeded, and none seemed likely to do so. Yet,

¹ Ross, *Red River Settlement*, pp. 112-13, 272.

² Morton, "Agriculture in the Red River Colony", pp. 320-1.

despite emigration from the Colony to the United States, the population was increasing beyond the power of farm, hunt, or fur trade to absorb the young men, *métis* and half-breed. Here was a factor making for change indeed. For as Alexander Ross told Governor Caldwell, the young men of mixed blood were troublesome because, though educated, they had been given no place in the upper class ; they therefore sank into the lower class and led it.¹

The one sure enterprise, the one for the commodities of which there was a market that all could reach, was the trade in furs. But the monopoly of the Company barred the entrance to all but the agents of the Company. The monopoly itself had not unnaturally been attacked. And the Company which held the exclusive right to trade also possessed the authority to govern. It had used the power so conferred to defend its right to a monopoly of the fur trade. The Company's right to govern had therefore also been attacked, and petitions for representative government and a free commerce had been sent to London. The little fur trade colony, isolated and semi-barbarous, had suddenly been stirred by demands for free trade and free institutions.

These were matters enough to produce a stir in the little Colony of Red River. But Red River was a village, rife with gossip and slander, in which every man, whatever his rank, was intimately known and censoriously judged. Dissatisfaction, warranted or unwarranted, with the character and conduct of certain persons of standing was a final disturbing factor in Red River. Governor Caldwell was not respected by a large section of his Council and the upper ranks of the fur trade. The Recorder, Adam Thom, was implacably disliked and distrusted by the French and *métis*. The Councillors, mostly men advanced in years and long in office, were viewed askance as former officers of the Company, as Europeans, as representatives, if representative at all, mainly of the British and Company elements in the Colony. The Chief Factors of the Red River District had been conscientious, unbending men, overawed by Simpson. These were the circumstances with which Governor Colville was confronted when he came to Red River in August 1850.

To explain just how these factors and personalities had operated to produce such circumstances, it would be well at this point to survey the history of Red River over the seven years which had preceded 1850.

¹ A.11/95, Ross to Caldwell, March 6, 1849 (enclosure to letter from Caldwell to Sir J. Pelly, November 22, 1850).

X

The monopoly rights of the Hudson's Bay Company under the Charter in Rupert's Land, and the licence, renewed in 1838, to exclusive trade in the North West Territories and on the Pacific Coast, gave it a legal right to exclusive trade enforceable in British territory. But in the Oregon Territory jointly occupied with the United States, the licence was good only against British subjects. In Rupert's Land the legal rights conferred by the Charter could not in fact be enforced in border regions, from which traders, themselves posted outside the limits of Rupert's Land, could lure the Indians and their furs by means of high prices or liquor. One such border region was the frontier with Canada north of the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence; another was the American border from Rainy Lake to the Souris valley.¹ In these border zones the fur trade was competitive. Competition, however, impaired the monopoly far beyond the actual area of competition. The high prices and the use of liquor brought about by competition drew the Indians over considerable distances, and so caused an extension of the region of high prices. It was therefore desirable for the Company either to drive other traders away by sharp competition, or, if that failed, to buy them off.

On the Oregon frontier ruthless competition had defeated the American traders from the Missouri.² In the Souris valley it would seem that the activities of Cuthbert Grant, brought into the service of the Company as Warden of the Plains in 1828, had succeeded in preventing the growth of commercial ties between the *métis* and American traders on the Missouri.³ At Pembina Simpson, as already noted, had used Andrew McDermot as a trader with special licence to put an American trader there out of business in 1824. There is evidence that one American made an effort to return in 1836, but otherwise the Pembina region was a vacuum for some twenty years.⁴ In the Rainy Lake District, however, competition with agents of the American Fur Company had been bitter. Finally in

¹ E.g. Glazebrook, *Hargrave Correspondence*, p. 8, John Siveright to James Hargrave, Fort Coulonge, May 2, 1824, "We have been much annoyed by Opposition". *H.B.S.*, III, p. xxxv and p. 278n.

² *H.B.S.*, XIII, Introduction by Burt Brown Barker, pp. lxii-iii.

³ MacLeod, "Cuthbert Grant of Grantown", p. 35.

⁴ D.5/15, McDermot to Christie, November 30, 1845 (enclosure to letter from Christie to Simpson, December 31, 1845); M[innesota] H[istorical] S[ociety], hereafter M.H.S., H.H. Sibley Papers, Henry R. Schoolcraft to W. A. Aitken, August 2, 1824; [J. R. Brown] to Sibley, January 23, 1836.

1833 the Hudson's Bay Company had undertaken to pay its rivals £300 a year on condition that they should remain out of the district. The payment was made annually until 1847,¹ when the American Fur Company had already passed from the control of Ramsay Crooks to the westerners, Henry H. Sibley of Mendota and his associates. Thus the borders of the Rainy Lake and Red River Districts had been free of competition for at least a decade when in December 1843, Norman W. Kittson "of the western outfit of the American Fur Company" visited Red River from St. Peter's.²

Kittson was a Canadian, born in Lower Canada. He had come west in 1828 and had served various traders from Detroit to St. Peter's. A dark, reserved, yet questing kind of man, he was one to take up and persevere in new ventures. The motive of his visit is unknown, but is presumably to be deduced from his subsequent acts. Kittson came, it would seem, to explore the possibilities of his having the co-operation of the private traders of Red River in opening a fur post at Pembina at a time when fur prices were rising.³ It is possible that the way had been prepared for him, or his visit suggested, by the American traders Joseph Rolette, who is reported to have come to Pembina in 1840, and James Green, who had come to the Settlement itself in 1843, and took up residence there, in 1845 marrying a daughter of Alexander Ross.⁴ Kittson hoped to make a profit in the first flush of a fur trade centred at Pembina, and then, having shown the Company what trouble he could cause, retire from the trade for a price.⁵ This would have been to repeat an old and well known pattern of the competitive border trade. It is possible that it would have been repeated, but for certain grievances and the general circumstances of the private traders of Red River. These made them respond so vigorously to Kittson's approach that it was impossible for the Company to compromise. As a result Kittson's venture, instead of ending quietly with Kittson a pensioner of the Company, resulted in that outburst of

¹ D.5/20, Ramsay Crooks to Simpson, October 2, 1847.

² D.5/9, D. Finlayson to Simpson, December 18, 1843. Ramsay Crooks (1787-1859), Scot; fur trader; manager, American Fur Company, 1817-33; bought and continued its Northern Department, 1834; retired, 1847. Henry Hastings Sibley (1811-91), entered American Fur Company, 1834; headquarters at Mendota; elected to Congress for 1848 for Territory of Wisconsin. See Pritchett, *Red River Valley*, 1811-1849, pp. 255-6.

³ D.4/67, fo. 13, Simpson to Governor and Committee, May 4, 1845.

⁴ Pritchett, *Red River Valley*, 1811-1849, pp. 254-5; P.A.M., Ross Papers (F), Statement by A. Ross on the Green case, December 19, 1844.

⁵ M.H.S., Sibley Papers, Kittson to Sibley, March 2, 1845.

free trading in Red River already alluded to, and which became a grave threat both to the Company's commercial rights and to its political authority.

The position of the private traders of Red River as local merchants and importers of goods has already been sketched. The use of one of them, Andrew McDermot, as a trader in furs with special licence, has also been noted. McDermot was an energetic, capable and egoistical Irishman, who was not content to be a mere petty trader. His colleague, James Sinclair,¹ half-breed son of William Sinclair, senior, and a brother of Chief Factor William Sinclair,² was a reserved, intense and able man, not satisfied to vegetate as a local merchant, or to accept an inferior rank as a half-breed. He had already done well as a trader, and had performed a remarkable, if little noted, feat in taking a party of emigrants from Red River overland by a new pass through the Rockies to Oregon in 1841.³ He and McDermot had been looking for new fields of enterprise. Sinclair proposed two, the building of a distillery and the export of tallow ; the Governor and Committee refused to approve the first but allowed the second.⁴ McDermot and Sinclair already had their own boats to bring in their imports from York. In 1841 they had entered into a freighting contract with the Company which was to run for three seasons and expire in 1843.⁵ In that year they had obtained permission to export tallow to York, for shipment to England in the Company's ships.

At this point things had begun to go wrong. Chief Factor Duncan Finlayson,⁶ Governor of Assiniboia, had been worried for some time by the increasing restlessness of the Indians and *métis*. They had challenged the Company's title to the soil ; their numbers were increasing ; they were the clients of the private traders. Finlayson thought that it was necessary to check the growth of population and of the private trade.⁷ Chief Factor Alexander Christie,⁸ a taut, conscientious man who had

¹ James Sinclair (1806-56). He was a graduate of the University of Edinburgh. He returned to Red River in 1828, to become a "petty trader" with Andrew McDermot.

² For a biography see *H.B.S.*, III, 456-8.

³ See *H.B.S.*, VI, 77-9. The story of Sinclair's trips in 1841 and 1854 has unfortunately not yet been told.

⁴ D.5/8, Governor and Committee to Simpson, June 1, 1843.

⁵ D.5/12, Christie to Simpson, December 27, 1844.

⁶ For a biographical note see *H.B.S.*, I, 437-8.

⁷ D.5/9, Finlayson to Simpson, December 28, 1843.

⁸ See MacLeod, *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*, and Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 47-8.

been in charge at Red River from 1833 to 1839, returned to replace the amiable Finlayson in 1844. Christie, who fully shared Finlayson's fears, and the nervous awe Simpson imposed on his subordinates, awarded the freighting contract in 1844 to other freighters, one of them Sinclair's brother, Thomas Sinclair.¹ At the same time the tallow shipped to York was not loaded for England, an act which was consistently explained thereafter on the ground that there was not space for it in the ships.² At that McDermot and James Sinclair put forward a claim for additional payment on their contract, on the ground that the pieces their boats had carried had frequently exceeded the standard ninety pounds. Christie refused to re-open the accounts ;³ the reason for cancellation of the contract was only too well known ; that is, Sinclair's trading in furs.⁴

The reasons given for these acts were doubtless good and sufficient, but there is no doubt that Finlayson and Christie both feared and sought to thwart the new enterprises of the two leading private traders. McDermot and Sinclair, for their part, knew that the Chief Factor desired to curb their activities as too enterprising traders. This they resented,⁵ and what was in the beginning a mere friction of private and Company interests flared into a bitter personal quarrel. Such was their mood when Kittson arrived in Red River in December 1843, and the development of the quarrel in 1844 was marked by their deliberate import of goods from St. Peter's and their deliberate trading of furs with Kittson. Simpson indeed reported that they were "encouraging traders from the United States to settle on the frontier".⁶

During his visit to Red River Kittson had indeed discussed the possibilities of co-operation with James Sinclair. "I received a letter from Mr. Sinclair, he is still anxious to make arrangements with me for the Northern trade, he seems very certain of something being made", Kittson wrote Sibley in the summer of 1844, and in the fall of that year he

¹ D.5/15, copy of Thomas Sinclair's accepted tender contract dated Fort Garry, May 24, 1844 (enclosure to letter from Christie to Simpson, September 18, 1845).

² D.5/12, Christie to Simpson, August 10, 1844.

³ D.5/15, Copies of letters from James Sinclair to Christie, July 18, 1845, and Christie to Sinclair, July 22, 1845 (enclosures to letter from Christie to Simpson, September 18, 1845).

⁴ A.10/20, McDermot to Governor and Committee, August 5, 1845 ; A.10/21, John McLaughlin to Governor and Committee, February 3, 1846.

⁵ A.10/20, McDermot to the Governor and Committee, August 5, 1845.

⁶ D.4/67, fo. 13, Simpson to Governor and Committee, May 4, 1845 ; D.4/34, fo. 10d., Simpson to John Ballenden, December 29, 1845.

arrived at Pembina from St. Peter's with an outfit for trade.¹ He had been outfitted by Sibley as chief agent of the American Fur Company, re-organized by Pierre Chouteau Jr. and Company in 1843. Kittson proceeded to build a post at the mouth of the Pembina River, on the site of former North West and Hudson's Bay Company posts. The site, as its previous occupation indicated, was a good one for trade. The Red offered communication to north and south. A short overland journey led to the Roseau River and the Lake of the Woods. The Pembina River led to the escarpment, beyond which lay the Turtle Mountain, an area rich in game, and the Souris valley. Kittson had grasped the utility of the Red River cart for primitive plains travel, and employed them in freighting between St. Peter's and Pembina. With them he or his half-breed agents could reach Turtle Mountain to the west or go overland to Rainy Lake to the east. Finally, Pembina lay within a couple of miles of the international frontier. Its presence was an invitation to *métis* and half-breeds to slip across with furs for trade, to come and hunt for Kittson, or to irritated Red River merchants to send a few carts by round-about routes with furs procured from the Indians and *métis* of Red River.

The prospect of the establishment of Kittson's post at Pembina gave McDermot and Sinclair a chance at once to open a new field of enterprise and to demonstrate to Christie and his advisers that they were not men to be crushed by the withdrawal of the favour of the local officers of the Hudson's Bay Company. They sent their carts on to St. Peter's to bring back goods for trade in Red River.² This covert, but scarcely concealed or to be concealed, defiance of the Charter by obtaining means for the illicit buying and exporting of furs may have had no other purpose than revenge for the wrongs they thought they had suffered and to force their re-admission into the good graces of the Company. But the trade with Pembina and St. Peter's was not to remain just a manoeuvre in the dispute between the two private traders and the Company's officers in Red River. It was too lucrative not to be attractive to a number of restless young men in the Settlement.

These young men, half-breed sons of retired fur traders, settled on their river lots and committed to a dull life of unprofitable farming, had learned of Kittson's intention to open a post at Pembina and had welcomed his appearance there. They were working with, and perhaps for, James

¹ Rife, "Norman W. Kittson . . .", pp. 228-9; M.H.S., Sibley Papers, Kittson to Sibley, July 15, 1844.

² M.H.S., Sibley Papers, McDermot to Sibley, June 3, 1844.

Sinclair.¹ A group of them, of whom Peter Garrioch² was one, as he records in his journal, went to St. Peter's for goods in the summer of 1844. On the way back they used, for the first time, and for fear of the Sioux, a route east of the Red, the later Wood or Crow Wing Trail.³ When they appeared in Red River with their American goods, it was apparent that not only was Red River no longer wholly dependent on York Factory for the import of its supplies, but that in American goods from St. Peter's any venturesome trader who dared to defy the Charter would have the means to obtain furs from the Indians for sale at Pembina. And both petty traders and Kittson were aided by the rising price of furs.⁴

So clear was the writing on the wall that that summer the Council of Assiniboia took steps to enforce the collection of customs duties.⁵ Simpson also had Thom re-draft the terms of the form of land tenure so as to sharpen the clauses which made trading in furs ground for revocation by the Company of the title to lands of such traffickers.⁶ It was not, however, until the next year that the Governor and Committee approved Thom's draft, and not until still later that the revised title deed was used to threaten McDermot and Sinclair. Every effort was now to be made to prevent these traders from supplying half-breeds and *métis* with goods to trade with the Indians.

This was the real danger created by Kittson's post at Pembina. It was not that he would obtain a few cart loads of furs from disgruntled or lawless petty traders in the Settlement. It was that these men would outfit the Indians and *métis* to go, as the *coureurs de bois* of old had gone, *en déroutine* among the Indians to winter with them and to persuade them to part with the furs which should have gone to the Company's posts to settle the Indian's "debt". The Company would suffer a double loss, for one season at least, the Indian's "debt" and the furs that would go to Kittson. And, as was always the case with intruders in the Company's preserves, the free trader would take the light and valuable furs, leaving the Indian to lug the heavy and less valuable in to the posts for the Company to accept for debt. A free trade in furs for export, fed by goods from St. Peter's, and drawing in more and more of the restless, too numerous and lawless *métis* and half-breeds, was the nightmare Governor

¹ P.A.M., Garrioch Journal, IV, 233.

² Peter Garrioch (1811-88), half-breed free trader; author of the Garrioch Journal.

³ P.A.M., Garrioch Journal, IV, 204-33.

⁴ D.4/67, fo. 13, Simpson to Governor and Committee, May 4, 1845.

⁵ Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 312.

⁶ D.5/12, Thom to Simpson, July 23, 1844.

Christie faced in 1844. He decided he must check this incipient free trade promptly and drastically.

As the trade with Pembina was illegal, he took legal advice before he proceeded against the law-breakers. The Recorder, Adam Thom, a Scot by birth and trained in the law in Lower Canada, was only too pleased to give such advice. A man of considerable legal learning and of an acute intelligence, he was nevertheless vain, pompous and lacking in judgement. Arrogant of mind and tactless of manner, Thom was endowed with a knack for irritating turns of speech and with a restless tongue and pen. He was, moreover, a standing invitation to trouble in a colony more than half French. Thom had been the author of the "Anti-Gallic Letters" in the Montreal *Herald* which had helped provoke the Rebellion of 1837 in Lower Canada. He had denounced "the perfect novelty of the absurdly exclusive doctrine of French nationality", and had warned that "Lower Canada ought to be English, at the risk, if necessary, of not being British".¹ This flat challenge to the nationality of French Canadians was not unknown in Red River, for in 1843 a champion of that nationality had settled in Red River, one Louis Riel.² The measures Thom now advised and Christie adopted were legalistic in nature and abrupt in application. As a result a situation which could have been handled, in the circumstances, only with a mixture of cajolery, intimidation and bluff, was dealt with stiffly and, as it seemed, vindictively, by a government impotent to enforce mild, let alone coercive measures.

Drastic as their measures were to be, Christie and Thom proceeded with some caution, and emphasized in their reports to Simpson that there could be no real security in the Settlement without a body of troops. The obvious and normal action would have been to have seized the goods of the first of those known to have traded illegally, and to have launched prosecutions. Thom, however, advised against this, on the ground that the Charter did not afford too clear and certain a ground for action, and that half of any furs forfeited would go to the Crown, which would result in publicity in England.³ The Company, only too aware of the jealousy

¹ P.A.C., Camillus, *Anti-Gallic Letters*; Duhamel, *Le Rapport de Durham*, p. 25.

² Louis (or Jean-Louis) Riel (1817-64); born at Ile-à-la-Crosse of a Canadian father and a half-breed mother; raised in Quebec as a wool-carder; in Company service at Rainy Lake 1837-40; a novice of the Oblate Fathers; married in Red River in 1843 Julie Lagimanière; father in 1844 of Louis Riel (1844-85) leader of the *métis* in 1869 and 1885.

³ D.5/13, Thom to Simpson, January 2, 1845.

its monopoly could arouse, was not at all anxious to awaken public interest in its difficulties with the Colony. Moreover, an attempt to seize goods imported by the American trader, James Green, had brought out some two hundred *métis* in great excitement, and Sheriff Ross had to be content with a sworn statement on the spot that the goods had been brought in by Green for one Aléxis Goulet,¹ not for trade.² The restraints imposed on the illegal fur trade would therefore have to be indirect. What Thom proposed and Christie approved was a proclamation issued on December 8, 1844, requiring a declaration from all importers of goods that they would not use the goods imported for the illegal traffic in furs.³ At the same time the half-breeds and *métis* were publicly advised that the private traders in furs could not collect their debt from them, being illegal traffickers. To ensure compliance with the declaration, a third proclamation required authorized importers to bring their outgoing mail to Fort Garry, addressed but not sealed, for the inspection of the Company's officers. The purpose was to stop the private fur trade within the Red River District by cutting off the supply of goods which made it possible. The petty traders had little choice but to sign the declaration and submit their mail for inspection if they were to obtain goods for their legitimate trade. All signed except McDermot and Sinclair, who refused to do so unless the wording of the declaration against trading in furs was altered. Christie and Thom declined to make the alteration, for they feared it would have opened the way to the pair trading through agents.⁴ The matter remained deadlocked.

During the winter of 1844-45 the payment of duties on the goods imported from St. Peter's in the previous summer caused trouble. The import of goods from the United States was a novelty, and the importers were prepared to make the most of it. They declined to pay on American imports the four per cent duty levied on all goods coming into the Colony by way of York Factory. There can be no doubt that their intention was only to test the government's firmness, but the pretext put forward was that they were only "comers and goers", that is, not regular traders, but natives of the soil following lawful occasions to which the

¹ Aléxis Goulet (1811-56), Canadian; married Josette Sivewright; father of Roger and Elzéar Goulet.

² P.A.M., Ross Papers (F), Statement by A. Ross on the Green case, December 19, 1844. Provincial Archives of British Columbia, hereafter P.A.B.C., Donald Ross Papers, Christie to Ross, November 31, 1844; D.5/12, Christie to Simpson, December 27, 1844.

³ D.5/12, Christie to Simpson, December 27 and 31, 1844.

⁴ D.5/13, Thom to Simpson, January 2, 1845.

import of goods was incidental.¹ When the Council insisted on payment through its Collector, James Bird,² the importers consulted and agreed not to pay except as a body.³ Some individuals were prevailed on to yield, however ; when McDermot and Sinclair also decided to give in, the remainder, having prepared a petition against the payment of duties, paid in order to have it considered.⁴

Despite the yielding of McDermot and Sinclair on this point, the original dispute over the freighting contract and the shipment of tallow remained open and relations between the local officers of the Company and the traders continued to be strained. Christie indeed offered to buy the tallow at York for the Company. McDermot finally accepted the offer and sold his, but Sinclair declined, wishing to establish his right to export.⁵ Both also refused for some weeks to sell to the Company the furs they had taken in the course of the winter. Again McDermot gave in and surrendered his furs, but Thom suspected that he had kept back the prime ones.⁶ Sinclair was more obstinate in this as in the other matters, which could only be taken to mean that he intended to sell his furs to Kittson at Pembina. What Sinclair did, the smaller half-breed traders could be expected to do. The excitement was intense and the impression was growing that the Company could not prevent a free trade. It was now that Thom and Christie began to suspect Sinclair of "expecting to be elected chief of the half breeds in place of Mr. [Cuthbert] Grant",⁷ a position he would presumably use to fight the developing battle for free trade on their and his own behalf.

XI

Such was the state of affairs when Governor George Simpson made his annual visit to Red River in June 1845. He approved the measures Christie had taken, though the Governor and Committee were to veto the proclamation against trading and that providing for a censoring of the mail. Then, with Thom's advice, Simpson proceeded to deal with the question of duties to be paid on goods imported into the Colony. The

¹ Ibid., same to same, April 28, 1845.

² See *H.B.S.*, I, 429, and Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 58.

³ *P.A.M.*, Garrioch Journal, V, 253-4.

⁴ Ibid., p. 263.

⁵ D.5/12, Christie to Simpson, December 27, 1844.

⁶ D.5/13, Thom to Simpson, March 10, 1845.

⁷ Ibid. ; also Christie to Simpson, April 16, 1845.

Council of Assiniboia, sitting under his presidency, took into consideration the petition of the half-breed and *métis* traders, praying that they might be relieved of the payment of the duties on goods imported from the United States.¹ The Council stood the matter over for three days, and then enacted certain regulations to govern such imports. Stoves were allowed to be imported free of duty by British subjects who were actual settlers, on a declaration that they were for the use of the importer. Goods for their own use might be imported by settlers up to the local value of £10. Settlers might also import goods for their own use or for consumption within the Settlement up to the local value of £50, if purchased from the sale of produce of the Settlement. All other imports were to be governed by the Imperial Act of 1842 (5 & 6 *Victoria*, c. 49) which regulated the trade of British colonies with foreign countries, and imposed duties and authorized exemptions. Regulations were also made for enforcing the above provisions, which were to be in effect a special licence to bring in a limited quantity of goods from the United States.² The purpose was to allow a restricted importation for consumption within the Settlement, but to prevent or impede the introduction of goods such as stoves which could be used to outfit the half-breeds and *métis* to trade with the Indians. It was a prudent attempt to safeguard the rights of the Company in the fur trade while allowing the Settlement to benefit from the opening of the new route to the south. But the regulations would, if they could be enforced, cut off the supply of trade goods to the private traders. They were followed by the issue of licences to trade to individuals who undertook not to trade in furs.

All the power of the Company was now being used to strangle the free trade which had flared up since 1843. Not only was it employing all legal means to cut off the flow of imports; Simpson had directed that McDermot's and Sinclair's goods ordered in the United Kingdom were not to be given space in the Company's ships, and this was done.³ Financial measures were taken also. The Company regulated the currency of the Settlement, and currency was needed to pay for part of the goods imported from St. Peter's. The Red River currency was not specie, but the Company's bills of exchange on London. The officer in charge of the Red River District controlled both the number issued and the rate of discount. As the bills were accepted gladly in St. Peter's, they had been used to pay for the goods there. In 1844 Christie had begun to restrict their issue, and made them payable at Fort Garry at a discount of 5 per cent, or at York with no discount. In mid-summer of 1845 he

¹ Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 315.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 318-20.

³ D.5/13, A. Barclay to Simpson, April 18, 1845.

threatened to call in all the Company's notes if the aiding and abetting of the free trade were not stopped.¹ The result of his threat was not quite what he intended, for the traders rapidly bought up the supply in the Settlement and created a shortage from which the Company itself began to suffer.

Such drastic measures did not succeed in checking the private trade ; what they did was to make the contest with McDermot and Sinclair a trial of strength and cunning watched by the whole Colony, and on the outcome of which the maintenance of the Company's monopoly in the Red River District depended. There is little doubt that McDermot and Sinclair persisted because they regarded the conflict as one between themselves and Christie and Thom ; Simpson and the Governor and Committee, they hoped, might be induced by their own sense of right, or by a mixture of threats and cajolery, to make concessions to them. McDermot now wrote complaining that Governors Finlayson and Christie and the Council of the Northern Department had been bent on thwarting the development of the Colony. He had always traded for furs, he declared, as had many others for the past two or three years, and had never sold a skin except to the Company. But he could, he warned ; he had *carte blanche* from Pierre Chouteau Jr. and Company to establish posts south of the line.² So McDermot and Sinclair maintained the struggle and contrived to obtain goods for trade in the winter of 1845-46 from the licensed traders and importers. Christie grimly continued to tighten his restrictions, but at the year's end wrote despairingly to Simpson that the private trade could no longer be checked by such measures when so many people had entered it, attracted by " the seductive doctrine about equality and Free-Trade that are industriously taught them ".³ The illicit trade, he wrote, was now beyond suppression by indirect means. Only the forcible seizure of furs could be decisive now, with a chain of well-manned posts to hold the border from Rainy Lake to Fort Ellice. Christie did seize the furs of one St. Germain in the winter of 1845-46,⁴ but a general seizure was impossible without an effective police force, or, as Christie concluded, a body of disciplined troops in the Settlement.⁵

Christie's conclusion was, all unawares, prophetic. For the dispute with McDermot and Sinclair, supported as they were by a running pack of petty traders and by Kittson at Pembina, had drawn the *métis* and

¹ D.5/14, Christie to Simpson, August 12, 1845.

² A.10/20, McDermot to the Governor and Committee, August 5, 1845.

³ D.5/15, Christie to Simpson, December 31, 1845.

⁴ D.5/17, Christie to Simpson, April 21, 1846.

⁵ D.5/15, Christie to Simpson, December 31, 1845.

half-breeds into the fur trade. And in the summer of 1845 the *métis* had been aroused by a chance encounter between a party of *métis* and a detachment of American cavalry on the plains south of the international boundary line.¹ The officer commanding the troop warned the leaders of the *métis* that they were trespassing and would not be allowed to continue to hunt south of the border. This warning had, of course, been inspired by Kittson and Sibley. It produced great excitement among the *métis* of Red River. If the warning were enforced, they would have two choices. One would be to cease to follow the buffalo hunt, which would have had the effect, of course, of throwing even more of them into the illicit fur trade. The other was for the buffalo hunters to migrate to Pembina to continue the hunt from there. Such a settlement at Kittson's post, however, would make Pembina an even more powerful magnet drawing the produce of the illicit trade south of the border. Simpson's concern when news of the encounter reached him can well be understood.²

Meantime Christie had practically driven McDermot and Sinclair to the wall by having Chief Factor James Hargrave³ at York Factory detain their goods on order from England.⁴ On August 29, 1845, Sinclair addressed a letter to Governor Christie, which put fourteen questions to him, and requested an answer. The drift of this by no means straightforward document was the implication that the half-breeds and *métis*, as natives, had certain rights in the country which were not nullified or limited by the Charter. Among these was the right to trade. The claim to rights as natives was an old *métis* tradition, which went back to the days when the North West Company had put it forward as propaganda designed to induce the *métis* to oppose the establishment of Selkirk's colony and the assertion of the claim of the Hudson's Bay Company to be lords of the soil in Rupert's Land. In his reply Christie dealt with the implication sharply, saying that the half-breeds and *métis* enjoyed the usual rights of British subjects in Rupert's Land, and that these rights were limited by the Charter.⁵

¹ D.5/14, Christie to Simpson, August 12, 1845.

² D.4/67, fos. 218-219d., Simpson to Lord Metcalfe, November 6, 1845.

³ For details of his career and family see MacLeod, *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*.

⁴ D.5/15, Christie to Hargrave, August 5, 1845 (enclosure to letter from Christie to Simpson, September 18, 1845).

⁵ D.5/15, James Sinclair et al. to Christie, August 29, 1845 (enclosure to letter from Christie to Simpson, September 18, 1845). The text of Sinclair's letter and Christie's reply of September 5, 1845, are printed in Begg's *History of the North-West*, I, 261-4.

Of the legal soundness of Christie's reply, made no doubt after consultation with Thom, there can be no question, and the agitators did not for the moment pursue the theme. They turned their attention to the American warning that the buffalo hunts from Red River could not range south of the line, and framed a petition to the Congress of the United States, asking to be admitted to the rights of American citizens on settlement on American territory.¹ Whether this petition was meant seriously or not, is not apparent. It was reported that John McLaughlin,² an Irish nephew of McDermot and an ardent opponent of the Company, who had come up from St. Louis in 1844, was to be sent to Washington with it. It was likely meant as a threat, or at most as a second line of action. Simpson himself had no doubt of its character. When he thanked Ramsay Crooks of the American Fur Company for receiving McLaughlin coolly in New York, he explained that McLaughlin was "A Nephew of McDermott, one of our disaffected Settlers, acting for him and a half breed of the name of Sinclair, who hope, by encouraging opposition from the United States, to drive a bargain with us at Red River".³ That was how Simpson saw what to Donald Ross⁴ were "Red River traffickers and traders",⁵ an active conspiracy of the Red River traders to break the monopoly, or to win a favoured position for themselves inside it. Simpson was now prepared to use every means to crush this conspiracy. And events had placed an unlooked-for opportunity at his disposal. The Oregon crisis made it possible to ask that Imperial troops be stationed in Red River. On December 15, 1845, Simpson wrote Earl Cathcart, Governor-General of Canada since November 26, 1845, to ask for a military force at Red River.⁶

In 1838 the joint occupation of the Oregon territory from 42° north to 54° 40' had been renewed for ten years, but by 1843 American immigration into the southern portion had made it clear that that part could not be held for the fur trade and British sovereignty. The Hudson's Bay Company had already begun to prepare a strategic retreat designed to hold the line of the Columbia River, and here the British

¹ D.5/14, Christie to Simpson, August 26, 1845; D.4/67, Simpson to Lord Metcalfe, November 6, 1845.

² John McLaughlin, a nephew of Andrew McDermot, came to Red River from St. Louis in 1844. He returned to Great Britain in 1849. See *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company*. . . 1857, p. 262.

³ D.4/33, Simpson to Crooks, November 28, 1845.

⁴ Chief Factor Donald Ross. See *H.B.S.*, III, 453.

⁵ D.5/26, Ross to Simpson, November 24, 1849.

⁶ D. 4/33, Simpson to Cathcart, December 15, 1845.

Foreign Office would have stood also. But in 1844 the question of American rights in Oregon became involved in that of the annexation to the United States of the Republic of Texas. Both matters were swept forward by the aggressive surge of "Manifest Destiny" which began to flow in that year of a presidential election. The victory of the Democratic candidate, James K. Polk, soon made it clear that while the Democratic party had been committed to fighting for the whole of Oregon and to obtaining the peaceful annexation of Texas, the administration was prepared to partition Oregon peacefully and to push the claims of Texas against Mexico to the point of war. While this was soon fairly well understood by the diplomats, there could be no assurance that agreement would be reached on the line of partition in Oregon and a show of military preparation had to be kept up.

It was on this necessity that Governor George Simpson seized as a pretext for obtaining for Red River that force of disciplined troops which Christie had informed him was indispensable if a stop was to be put to the illicit trade.

XII

The Imperial Government was, of course, already aware of the threat to north-west British America, and had begun to ready the defences of Canada. Lieutenant Henry J. Warre, A.D.C., and Lieutenant Mervyn Vavasour, R.E., had been despatched on a secret mission to report on the possibility of establishing military posts in central British America and on the Pacific Coast. They had travelled west with Simpson in the early summer of 1845, and Simpson was careful then to point out to them the military advantage of Red River, namely, that it had a supply of food.¹ But it was only later, when the news of the meeting of the *métis* with American cavalry reached him, that he began to press the Canadian government and the Governor and Committee in London to have a military force despatched to Red River. The Oregon crisis, with its necessary military precautions, was a godsend in the dangerous circumstances of the Company in Red River. Both Simpson and the Governor and Committee proceeded to press on the Imperial Government the need of a garrison in Red River to hold that valuable intermediate territory and support the defence of Oregon. But the real motive in Simpson's mind, though carefully concealed, was never in doubt. Simpson was using the crisis to obtain troops for Red River who would overawe the turbulent *métis*. He wrote to Donald Ross on December

¹ D.4/32, Simpson to Warre and Vavasour, May 30, 1845.

29, 1845 : " If we succeed in getting a garrison established at Red River, we shall be able to put down the illicit trade and keep the settlers in order ; but nothing must be said in the country about it, until we are quite certain of it ".¹ This was the real and only reason for wanting troops, for Simpson had good reason to believe by early December 1845 that the crisis would be resolved peacefully.²

Meantime, the Governor and Committee had had time to digest the despatches from Red River for 1844-45. Their considered view of the troubles in the Colony was much fairer than that of the local officers, immersed in the petty irritations of local affairs. The Governor and Committee recognized the need of Red River to develop as a colony, and to have alternative enterprises to the trade in furs. They did not approve the currency regulations of 1845. They vetoed the collection of the twenty per cent duty on imports from the United States and ordered that no more than the usual four per cent be levied. Every effort must be made, they declared, to encourage exports and to find space for them ; if need be, colonists might charter vessels themselves. Even in the matter of trading in furs the Governor and Committee showed themselves flexible. At a distance it should be stopped by enforcing the land grants, but around the Settlement, it would be better to license the traders and take their furs at a fixed tariff.³ The situation following the receipt of these instructions was that indirect methods of suppression had been tried and had failed ; there remained only two methods, ruthless competition, and the enforcement of legal rights in the law courts backed by military force.

The former of these measures was already well in hand ; in December 1845, John Palmer Bourke⁴ had been sent down to the international line to begin a post for the Company on the British side of the boundary.⁵ This was to be Pembina Post and was to remain in use off and on until 1870. Bourke exerted himself to counteract the attractions of Kittson's post for the Indians hunting north of the line. The establishment of a post was the more necessary as Kittson had made his own permanent, and invited the *métis* to join him. Simpson himself was taking a hand in the game by asking Ramsay Crooks of the American Fur Company to obtain an American licence for a trader to come into Kittson's territory

¹ P.A.B.C., Ross Letters, Simpson to Ross, December 29, 1845.

² D.5/15, Crooks to Simpson, December 1, 1845.

³ D.5/17 Governor and Committee to Simpson and the Councils of the Northern and Southern Departments of Rupert's Land, April 3, 1846.

⁴ For a biography, see *H.B.S.*, II, 206-7.

⁵ D.5/15, Christie to Simpson, December 30, 1845.

and compete with him on his own grounds.¹ In 1846 Henry Fisher,² originally from Prairie du Chien, was brought down from Fort Ellice, given an American licence, and with fourteen men began to compete with Kittson on the American side of the line.³ An inevitable accompaniment of the competitive trade followed, the use, or the fear of the use, of liquor. Both sides were soon busily engaged in accusing each other of using liquor in trade. Kittson's protests at first went no farther than St. Peter's. Finally in 1849, when Sibley became representative of Minnesota Territory, they were to reach the State Department at Washington, were referred to the Foreign Office, and by the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office and by the Colonial Office to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company.⁴ The Governor, Sir John Henry Pelly,⁵ was able to satisfy Earl Grey, the Colonial Secretary,⁶ that nothing was amiss, but the question was an awkward one, as it still was under consideration in 1850 when the Company was faced with the questions raised by petitions sent to the Imperial Government by its own colonists at Red River. That liquor was used to "treat" is certain; that it was traded for furs is unlikely. The competition thus begun was to wage fiercely for the next few years, and competition was to prove the Company's best, as it was to become its only, defence.

Yet it was a competitive, or free, trade that the opponents of the Company were now openly seeking. On February 11 and 26, 1846, the discontented traders met at McDermot's house in what were practically public meetings held within sight of the walls of Fort Garry.⁷ The resentful and braggart McDermot, piqued at the treatment he had received at the hands of Finlayson, Christie and Thom, and resolved to hurt the Company enough to make it realize that he could not be crushed,

¹ Ibid.; D.4/32, Simpson to Christie, December 2, 1844.

² Chief Trader Henry Fisher. See *H.B.S.*, III, 440-1. See also Archives of Archdiocese of St. Boniface, No. 264. Fisher was said to be trading at Pembina with a Wisconsin licence, in competition with Kittson with an Iowa licence.

³ D.5/16, Christie to Simpson, January 1, 1846; D.5/17, same to same, April 21, 1846; D.4/33, Simpson to Crooks, November 28, 1845.

⁴ M.H.S., Sibley Papers, Kittson to Sibley, March 2, 1846; D.5/15, Christie to Simpson, December 30, 1845; *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company . . . 1857*, pp. 369-77.

⁵ For a biography, see *H.B.S.*, VI, 399-401.

⁶ Sir Henry George Grey, Viscount Howick (1802-94), who succeeded his father as the third Earl Grey in 1845. He was an active leader in Whig interests in the House of Lords and for nearly six years from June 1846 he held office as Secretary of State for the Colonies. See *D.N.B.*

⁷ D.5/17, Christie to Simpson, April 21, 1846.

was a fomenter, if not a leader, of the agitation. Perhaps more truly a leader was the resolute and reserved Sinclair, disposed not only, like McDermot, to seek revenge, but also to defend the claims of his own people, the half-breeds and the *métis*. And a third leader had been added, Rev. G. A. Belcourt¹ of the Church of Rome. Belcourt had founded the mission to the Saulteaux at Baie St. Paul, the Saulteaux village, where he had laboured energetically. He had also made missionary journeys to Rainy Lake and Winnipegosis, and had founded a second mission at Wabassimong on the Winnipeg River. Belcourt had become a critic of the Company, perhaps at bottom because the Company's officers were disposed to frown on outlying missions as only too likely to become nests of free traders, but perhaps also, as Christie and Simpson alleged, because he had been denied the privilege of taking his clerical fees in fur.² Whatever his reasons, Belcourt assumed the leadership of the agitated *métis*, and with Louis Riel and Sinclair was urging them on to assert their native "rights" in Rupert's Land and the North-West, rights, it was asserted, which the Charter did not limit or destroy. But he also insisted that they employ only constitutional means, and in the circumstances to do so was a public service.³ Two petitions, one French and drafted by Belcourt and one in English by Sinclair, were drawn up at this time and addressed to the Colonial Secretary; they asked for free trade and representative government.⁴ They were not to be despatched, it was decided, until it was learned how the petition to Congress⁵ had been received. While the agitators and the Company's officers awaited John McLaughlin's return from the United States, Congress had refused to entertain the petition.⁶ In the interval McDermot once more let Christie know that he was prepared to discuss terms. Christie thought it would be fatal to listen to him: "... in fact by the whole Settlement the fate of McDermot and Sinclair, whatever it may be, is looked forward to as

¹ See p. xlix.

² D.5/17, Christie to Simpson, April 21, 1846; D.4/71, fos. 100-103d., Simpson to Governor and Committee, May 9, 1850.

³ Reardon, *George Anthony Belcourt* . . . , p. 81; M.H.S., Sibley Papers, Kittson to Sibley, March 2, 1846, "Politics are running very high in the settlement . . . to petition the Queen for Freedom of trade, a Govener [sic] independent of the H.B.C. and an elective legislature, and if these are not granted . . . I am certain it will end in a revolution . . .".

⁴ *Hudson's Bay Company*. (*Red River Settlement.*), 1849, pp. 1-5.

⁵ See p. lxvi.

⁶ *Hudson's Bay Company*. (*Red River Settlement.*), 1849, p. 101, J. Crofton to B. Hawes, February 12, 1848.

the real test of our power—the practical arbiter of the grand question whether law or lawlessness, the Hudson's Bay Company or a Confederacy of Smugglers, shall be paramount".¹

In London, meanwhile, the Colonial Secretary, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, had transmitted to the War Office the request of the Company for troops at Red River. In March 1846 a decision to send a force was taken.² The matter had, however, been referred to the Commander-in-chief, the Duke of Wellington. The Duke weighed the considerations in the light of the purpose for which the troops were alleged to be sent, defence against American attack, and at once saw the possibility of a small British force being pushed back by superior American numbers within the probably indefensible walls of the fur trade forts. The result would be a cheap victory for the Americans and a great loss of prestige for British arms. The Duke who had a considerable respect, soon to be justified in Mexico, for the American Army, demurred at approving the expedition until officers had been sent to Red River to report on the state of the fortifications there.³ This requirement of the Commander-in-chief, which was eminently sensible, would have delayed the despatch of the troops for another year, by which time the pretext afforded by the Oregon crisis would have vanished. The Treasury, when consulted, declined to commit itself to the expenditures which might be required for the construction of fortifications in the heart of North America.⁴ Gladstone therefore decided to delay the despatch of troops until two officers had been sent to report on the defences of Red River, and so informed Governor Sir John Henry Pelly.⁵

The opportunity afforded by the Oregon crisis to obtain a garrison for Red River seemed to have been lost. But it was not lightly to be given up, and Governor Pelly made a last desperate effort by pressing upon Gladstone the Company's claim to protection and its willingness to bear some undefined portion of the cost of the garrison. This proved enough to persuade an extraordinarily complaisant Colonial Secretary. Though the right to protection was not admitted, in view of the undefined relations between the Imperial Government and a charter colony, the decision to send the troops in 1846 was renewed, with the addition of two engineering officers instructed to report to the Commander-in-chief on the state of the fortifications, and with no definite understanding as to the

¹ D.5/17, Christie to Simpson, April 21, 1846.

² London, P.R.O., W.O. 1/557, War Office to Gladstone, March 2, 1846.

³ Ibid., Wellington to Gladstone, April 8, 1846.

⁴ Ibid., Gladstone to Wellington, April 11, 1846.

⁵ Ibid., Gladstone to Pelly, April 17, 1846.

division of the costs.¹ The Company had done very well, and its luck was to continue. News of the peaceful settlement of the Oregon dispute reached London on June 29, 1846, and rendered the despatch of troops to Red River unnecessary. But on June 26 the troops assigned to this service had sailed from Cork for York Factory.²

The force consisted of 307 officers and men of the Sixth Regiment of Foot (the Royal Warwickshires), 28 officers and men of the Royal Artillery, and 1 sergeant and 11 men of the Royal Sappers and Miners.³ The officer commanding was Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) J. F. Crofton.⁴ Fifteen women and seventeen children accompanied the force. It reached York Factory on August 8, and the troops, leaving most of their guns and stores, arrived in Red River on September 17 and 18; what stores could be transported arrived on October 10. For the first time the Red River Settlement saw the scarlet coats of the British line, and heard the tap of military drums as the soldiers marched swiftly to their quarters in Upper and Lower Fort Garry. And the blare of their bugles over the plain, the stiff sentries at the gates, meant that the civil power in its struggle to put down the illicit trade in furs could now count on the military arm.

The presence of senior army officers in the Settlement offered an opportunity for ending the invidious and embarrassing union of the government of the Colony with the monopoly of trade.⁵ Though neither Colonel Crofton nor his successor, Major Griffiths,⁶ was in fact appointed Governor of the Colony, both officers, by their bearing and accessibility, did much to ease the tension in the Settlement, and their tastes did something to vary, and to elevate, the standards of civilization in Red River. At their instigation, the Red River library was founded;⁷

¹ A.8/3, fos. 31d.-32d., Lord Lyttelton to Pelly, April 28, 1846; London, P.R.O., W.O. 1/557, Gladstone to Wellington, April 28, 1846. (In this account of the decision to send troops to Red River I have depended on Mr. W. D. Smith's "The Despatch of Troops to Red River, in 1846, in relation to the Oregon Question".)

² Smith, "The Despatch of Troops to Red River, in 1846 . . .", p. 111.

³ London, P.R.O., W.O. 33/21, Crofton to Somerset, August 23, 1846.

⁴ John Ffolliott Crofton (1801-85); ensign in 6th Foot, 1824; in 1877 made major-general.

⁵ See pp. xlvii-vii.

⁶ John Thomas Griffiths, an ensign in the 6th (1st Warwickshire) Regiment of Foot, 1814; a major in 1846; with the 25th (King's Own Borderers) Regiment in 1849; in 1851 retired.

⁷ D.5/19, Christie to Simpson, June 29, 1847; Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 336.

for their convenience, cigars were admitted free of duty, and it was they who first asked for a more frequent mail service.¹

The effect of the coming of the troops was immediate. The discontent within the Colony subsided. The competition with Kittson in the fur trade along the border still went on, but the illicit trade throughout the Red River District diminished, or was driven underground. At the news alone, brought by Simpson in June 1846, the almost open defiance of 1845 had ceased, and the Company found itself strong enough to make a settlement with the two chief private traders. As well as the prospect of the troops, the terms of the revised land deed were held over their heads.² McDermot capitulated, but received a payment of £100 for the losses he claimed to have suffered in the shipment of tallow, and was allowed to sell his furs on hand to private parties in England.³ It was soon apparent that he once more occupied his old position of tolerated private trader, for late in 1846 one of his sons was put in charge of Pembina Post, and he himself remained a leading merchant of Red River until the end of the Company's regime.⁴ Sinclair also offered to make peace,⁵ but Simpson, who distrusted him, refused to offer terms.⁶ It was this presumably that led Sinclair to proceed to England in the summer of 1846 to lay the petitions, English and French, of the natives before the Colonial Office. Simpson had divided and weakened, but he had not destroyed, the Red River opposition. Despite the restored quiet in Red River, the last had not been heard of the discontents of 1845-46. Indeed, the end of Ramsay Crooks' connection with the American Fur Company in 1847 was to give Sibley and Kittson the whole frontier from Rainy Lake to Turtle Mountain, and it forced the Company to make the post at Pembina permanent and place a Chief Factor in charge of the border trade. Thus in the second winter the troops were in Red River, that of 1847-48, the competition with Kittson was to increase in fury, a fury which was to reach its peak in the winter of 1848-49.

It was not, however, the support which the troops gave the government of Red River that alone explained the peace which had descended on the Colony. One of the main causes of the troubles of 1844-45 had been the want of a market and other opportunities of profit for the private traders.

¹ D.5/18, Christie to Simpson, November 23, 1846.

² D.5/17, James Sinclair to Simpson, June 4, 1846.

³ D.5/18, McDermot to Simpson, July 17, 1846; D.4/35, Simpson to McDermot, July 17, 1846.

⁴ In 1880 he was made a director of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

⁵ D.5/17, James Sinclair to Simpson, June 4, 1846.

⁶ D.4/35, Memorandum from Simpson to Christie, September 21, 1846.

Now the freighting of supplies for the troops created a good deal of business ; 1846 was a year of a short harvest and a poor hunt, and freight had to be brought from St. Peter's and even St. Louis,¹ flour from Britain and Canada,² and cattle driven down from Fort Ellice.³ And the soldiers gave the petty merchants of the Settlement a better market for their goods than they had ever known. Thus Her Majesty's soldiers not only quelled the *métis* but placated the private traders ; they had brought not only peace but prosperity. It is, however, to be noted that it was the private traders, not the *métis* and half-breeds who enjoyed this prosperity. Short crops and bad hunts made both 1846 and 1847 years of trial for the *métis* and drove many to winter on the plains.

While the long purse of the British tax-payer wrought these desirable changes in Red River, the fact remained that the changes were incidental to the purpose for which the troops had been sent, to warn the government of the United States that British territory in North America would be defended. That purpose had been effected even before the troops reached Hudson Bay, and in June 1847, it was decided to withdraw the Red River garrison.⁴ Fortunately for the Colony, the decision was made too late to be carried out in that year, and it was not until June 1848 that the troops embarked at Red River for York Factory.

So beneficial had their presence been to the Hudson's Bay Company as well as to the Settlement, that the Company strove to prevent the withdrawal, and when that endeavour failed, to have the garrison replaced. The Colonial Office was sympathetic, but the Duke of Wellington refused to consider a replacement with regular troops, especially as nothing had been done to improve the fortifications. Sir John Pelly tried to obtain at least a detachment of the Royal Canadian Rifles, a regiment recruited in Canada, but the Duke refused even this.⁵ Moreover, it was feared, as the Rifles were mostly half-breeds themselves, that they would desert and join the buffalo-hunters.⁶ It was not made easier for Sir John to persevere in the face of these difficulties by the fact that he was still endeavouring to obtain the troops by a subterfuge. " The

¹ D.4/35, Simpson to Pierre Chouteau, Jr. & Co., July 27, 1846, introducing Robert Clouston and J. P. Bourke, who were sent with a cart train to St. Peter's and St. Louis for sugar and other supplies for the troops.

² D.5/20, Christie to Simpson, November 30, 1847.

³ D.5/18, same to same, November 23, 1846.

⁴ London, P.R.O., W.O. 1/577, Grey to Wellington, June 3, 1847.

⁵ D.5/20, A. Barclay to Simpson, December 3, 1847.

⁶ D.5/21, Pelly to Simpson, January 28, 1848.

case was put as strongly as it could well be", wrote Archibald Barclay¹ to Simpson, "without disclosing the fact that the protection required was not so much against the Americans as against the settlers themselves".² Finally, however, the War Office proposed that a contingent of Chelsea out-pensioners be sent to the number of two hundred men, and the Company, after some misgivings, agreed that they would serve the purpose.³ Nor was the proposal as absurd as at first sight it seemed to be. The term of enlistment in the British Army at that time was twenty years. A soldier might have served his term and received his discharge when no more than forty years of age; he indeed might have been granted an earlier discharge because of a minor wound that would not incapacitate him for garrison duty. The out-pensioners, in short, were not necessarily old men or seriously incapacitated; they were used for garrison duty in British towns and some had been sent as soldier settlers to Canada and New Zealand; some of those who were to come to Red River in 1848 were still active men twenty years later. It was therefore urged in support of the proposal that these men would make good settlers and be quite capable of performing the military duties that would be required of them in Red River, periodical drill and perhaps summons to aid the civil power. There seems to be little reason to doubt that this argument might have been substantiated, if the matter had rested only with the pensioners. Moreover, though this was not a consideration at the time, their pensions would go some way to continue the cash market that the regular troops had furnished the Red River merchants.

On September 17-20, 1848, then, the first contingent of pensioners arrived at Fort Garry,⁴ in number 56 men, 42 women and 57 children. They were quartered in Upper Fort Garry until, as the terms of their enlistment required, they could be allotted grants of land within two miles of the Fort and had built houses on them. The men were chiefly Irish and Scottish by birth, as the majority of the soldiers of the British Army were in the nineteenth century.⁵ Because they were soldier settlers and brought their families, the bands of children and bundles of household effects did much to detract from the military

¹ Archibald Barclay, secretary to the Governor and Committee. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, VI, 386-7.

² D.5/20, Barclay to Simpson, December 3, 1847.

³ D.5/21, Pelly to Simpson, January 28, 1848.

⁴ D.5/23, Christie to Simpson, November 28, 1848.

⁵ The names of the men of this and the party of 1850, seventy-six in all, are given in Martin, *Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures*, pp. 203-04.

character of the pensioners in the watchful and critical eyes of Red River.¹ This unfavourable impression a strict and vigilant commanding officer might have avoided, but such an officer was wanting. Major William Bletterman Caldwell, commanding the pensioners, was an elderly, dull-witted giant, punctilious with respect to his own dignity and comfort, but incapable of maintaining the one or ensuring the other. His insistence on keeping a tent raised over his family in the stern of the York boat which brought them to Red River, thus depriving the steersman of the use of the steering sweep in fast water, was an inauspicious beginning.² The man was not only a *moonias*, a greenhorn, he was a selfish one to boot. His second-in-command, Captain Christopher Vaughan Foss, was to reveal more soldierly qualities in bringing up his party,³ but he too was to exhibit defects of character later. The general impression created in the Colony, still regretful of the departure of the regulars, was not only that the pensioners would not have as much money to spend as the regulars, but also that they need not be feared too much. Events were to confirm this impression.

The decision first taken was to send out two hundred pensioners with their dependents. This would have been a considerable accession to the Colony. The War Office envisaged the scheme as one of military settlement, designed not only to strengthen the forces of law and order in Red River, but also to enable the pensioners to establish themselves on the land. The terms made for them were that as well as drawing their pensions in the Colony, they should receive 1s. 6d. a day for two years and a land grant of 20 acres for a private, 30 for a corporal and 40 for a sergeant. All the grants were to be within two miles of Upper Fort Garry, a provision which caused trouble and required adjustment, as there was not enough unclaimed land within that distance. The pensioners and their families were to be quartered in Upper Fort Garry and fed by the Company until they had built houses on their grants. Some tried to claim that the houses were to be provided by the Company. They proved at first a discontented and unsettled addition to the Colony. A few of them, men and women, were somewhat given to drinking and fighting, and many of them were not much interested in the new country or the cultivation of their grants. But the task of surveying the lots and building of the houses westward along the Assiniboine went forward. Major Caldwell and Captain Foss were made welcome at the officers' mess in Upper Fort Garry; like their men, the officers proved somewhat

¹ MacLeod, *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*, pp. 229-34.

² D.5/22, William Sinclair to Simpson, September 20, 1848.

³ *Ibid.*

difficult to accommodate. Caldwell was assigned the old experimental farm situated up the Assiniboine towards St. James, while Foss claimed and was given a portion of Peltier's (later Armstrong's) Point on that river. And so these discharged veterans, like the legionaries of Rome, settled on their land, by a frontier fortress they might be called to defend. But their discipline was too slack, their appearance too unmilitary, their numbers too few, for them to constitute an effective garrison.

The pensioners, however, whatever their military defects, were the only kind of garrison Red River could hope to have except in an international crisis. The regulars had been gained by a stroke of good fortune ; the despatch of the pensioners was a realistic attempt to deal with the normal circumstances of the Colony. The Company, of course, might, like the East India Company, have raised, trained and paid its own forces, and there was talk of raising an auxiliary force among the natives in 1846-48. But in the end the Company did nothing, preferring to maintain its dividends rather than to ensure the security of the border establishments. It thus invited the defeat the *métis* were to inflict on it in 1849. But as the Company would probably have wound up its affairs rather than have assumed military commitments, it is reasonable to conclude that the sending of the pensioners was a not unreasonable way to endeavour to meet the needs of the Colony.

At the same time, the Governor and Committee finally attempted to solve the basic difficulty in governing the Colony, namely that the same Company which enjoyed the monopoly of the fur trade appointed the government and courts whose duty it was to enforce the monopoly. To this fundamental anomaly Simpson had already called their attention, selling his own stock in the Company to protect his position as chief magistrate ; and the petitions of 1846 had brought it to public notice. To meet the situation, Major Caldwell, on the nomination of the Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey, had been given by the Governor and Committee a commission as Governor of Assiniboia.¹ What had been contemplated for Crofton and Griffiths was bestowed on Caldwell. He was not a happy choice, although no doubt the best material available for so poor and obscure a post. But he was dull-witted and imperceptive. In consequence his good intentions went astray, and he was soon embroiled with his second-in-command, and his Council. His interest in the Church of England and its missionary work made him, who should have been impartial, a partisan of the clerical party, while his sympathy with the *métis*, based on a sound instinct, as his successor, F. G. Johnson,² was

¹ D.5/21, Pelly to Simpson, March 24, 1848.

² Francis Goodschall Johnson, Q.C. See Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 49.

to demonstrate, appeared only to be an attempt at intrigue. In short, Caldwell was not the firm and judicious Crofton. Thus the Company and the government of the Settlement were separated, as far as might be short of the revocation of the Charter, in an attempt to ensure at once the impartiality of the local government and the maintenance of the legal rights of the Company. Caldwell was instructed by letter of July 10, 1848—he did not receive the instructions until February 3, 1849¹—to inquire into the grievances of the native settlers, such as were alleged in the petitions of 1846, and to report his findings to the Colonial Secretary.² Earl Grey had responded to the petitions by consulting Colonel Crofton and Major Griffiths, the officers who had commanded the detachment of the Sixth Foot in Red River. Both had exonerated the Company of all charges of oppressive government, of exploitation of the Indians and of using liquor in the fur trade.³ Grey had therefore decided that no Parliamentary enquiry was necessary, and had merely ordered Caldwell to make a personal enquiry on the spot.

So much, it may be noted in retrospect, had James Sinclair achieved by his journey to London in 1846; any further development would depend upon the nature of Caldwell's report. In London, Sinclair had joined forces with Alexander Kennedy Isbister,⁴ like Sinclair both a native of Rupert's Land and a graduate of the University of Edinburgh. Though Isbister had become and was to remain an expatriate, he never allowed his interest in his native land to grow cold. After Sinclair's departure, Isbister had plunged into research in the Company's past, and soon convinced himself that he had proof that the Charter was void. In 1847 he had published his hasty findings as a pamphlet, *A Few Words on the Hudson's Bay Company*, together with the petitions from Red River. Thus, although Sinclair had accepted a settlement of his own difficulties with the Company before he left London,⁵ a champion of the rights claimed by the natives of Red River remained in London in the person of

¹ Such is Caldwell's statement but the instructions, dated June [sic] 10, 1848, are included in the minutes of the Council of Assiniboia, September 20, 1848 (Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 345-6). Presumably the letter was inserted afterwards. The date of July 10 is corroborated in the Blue Book, *Hudson's Bay Company*. (*Red River Settlement.*), 1849, p. 7.

² A.11/95, Caldwell to Governor and Committee, March 28, 1849, enclosing copy of his report to Earl Grey dated March 22, 1849.

³ *Hudson's Bay Company*. (*Red River Settlement.*), 1849, pp. 101-03; 109-14.

⁴ A. K. Isbister (1822-83), born at Cumberland House; educated in Scotland; became a teacher, writer of text books and Dean of College of Preceptors.

⁵ D.5/19, Governor and Committee to Simpson, April 14, 1847.

Isbister. It was his pamphlets, with the petitions, which had prompted Earl Grey to order Caldwell to investigate the allegations of oppressive government by the Company.

XIII

The situation at the end of 1848 then, was, that in Red River the restraint imposed by the presence of regular troops had been slackened, and in London the Colonial Office was awaiting Caldwell's report. On the former account, a renewal of activity in the illicit trade was therefore only too likely in Red River, and in London there might be a public enquiry into the conduct of the Company with all the attendant and unwelcome publicity. The next year would be a trying one, and the outlook was not hopeful. The conscientious and exacting Christie was about to begin a well-earned furlough, delayed since 1847. He did not, as it happened, leave Red River until the summer of 1849. His place as Chief Factor in charge of the Red River District had been taken by the equally painstaking John Ballenden. But on his way from Sault Ste. Marie in the fall of 1848 Ballenden had suffered a paralytic stroke which partially incapacitated him for some months. Fortunately Ballenden was known and well liked in the Settlement, especially by the Presbyterians. While the Company's affairs were thus somewhat weakly managed, the civil government of Assiniboia was not in good order. Governor Caldwell had not won the confidence of his Council or of the Settlement, as was shown when he began to gather information for his report to the Colonial Secretary. He had simply sent a list of written questions to selected individuals in the Settlement and invited them to reply;¹ critics said the questions were leading questions, partial to the Company, and that his choice of informants was equally biased.² In brief, the Governor was suspected of being a "Company man". The suspicion was unfounded, but was almost unavoidable in what was, after all, the colonial equivalent of a "company town" of a later time. And after the New Year the Governor had felt impelled to discipline his second-in-command, Captain Foss, for being absent from Fort Garry without leave, and suspended him from the performance of his duties.³ Finally, as the illicit trade spread through the Red River District a

¹ D.5/24, Thom to Simpson, March 28, 1849.

² A.13/4, John McLaughlin to Earl Grey, January 16, 1850 (enclosure to letter from Merivale to Pelly, dated Colonial Office, January 31, 1850).

³ D.5/23, Ballenden to Simpson, December 30, 1848.

second time, it was no longer a defiant venture fostered by the chief private traders, exposed to pressure by the Company, but many little trials of luck by half-breeds and *métis*, too numerous to be all detected, or to be punished except by example.

The free trade had in fact, despite the presence of troops for two years, become a permanent factor in the life of the Red River District. It was in the event to be contained by the superior competitive power of the Company, but in 1848 its containment did not seem to be likely. The agitation for a free trade had sprung from two sources, the grievances of the private traders and the appearance of Norman Kittson on the frontier. The grievances of McDermot and Sinclair had been removed or suppressed, but Kittson remained and his presence drew a host of petty traders into the fur trade. The Company had made no effort to buy him off, and Kittson was now striving to consolidate his position. The retirement of Ramsay Crooks in 1847 had virtually ended the American Fur Company, and Kittson could trade from Pembina to Rainy Lake.¹ He had also made friends. In 1848 he married a daughter of Narcisse Marion of St. Boniface,² as Green had married a daughter of Alexander Ross. And he had gained two allies. One was Rev. G. A. Belcourt, the other the American government.

Belcourt, after his open break with the Company in 1846, had been sent back to Quebec by Provencher in October 1847.³ But Belcourt alarmed Christie before leaving Red River by saying that he would return, and a petition to the Archbishop of Quebec for his recall was begun by the Canadians and *métis*.⁴ His return would cause trouble indeed, when the troops had left. Belcourt had always been a restless missionary, his people were now restless too; and one hundred families moved to Pembina in the fall of 1847, driven by the hard times of 1846-47. Simpson wrote to the Archbishop of Quebec and Belcourt to ensure that Belcourt would not return to Red River. The Archbishop replied that he thought Belcourt should retire to his native parish, but Belcourt was defiant. He invoked the aid of Isbister, who referred the case to the Catholic Society of St. Thomas of Canterbury, a society maintained to defend the rights of Catholics.⁵ He finally wrote menacingly to Simpson of settling at

¹ D.5/20, Christie to Simpson, October 2, 1847.

² Narcisse Marion (1805-77), Canadian; a miller and storekeeper of St. Boniface.

³ D.5/20, Christie to Simpson, November 30, 1847.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Reardon, *George Anthony Belcourt*, p. 87.

Pembina, where indeed it was already arranged that he should go.¹ Simpson's tone changed at once ; he was ready to have Belcourt back, provided only that he did not intervene in " the politics of the country ".² But Belcourt had his own plans. What these were was revealed when in 1848 he became a missionary of the Diocese of Dubuque and began a mission at Pembina.³ There *métis* began to join him, organized a council and a buffalo hunt,⁴ and hunted and traded for Kittson. Kittson's position was thus greatly strengthened ; the next thing was to obtain the establishment of a military post.

Kittson was connected through H. H. Sibley with that " mocassin ring " of men who had made money in the fur trade and were turning to general business, real estate and politics for new enterprises. They had organized the Territory of Minnesota in 1849, and Alexander Ramsey had been elected Governor, and H. H. Sibley representative of the Territory in Congress. Kittson could thus obtain a hearing for his wishes. The first result of this political support for Kittson was a military expedition to Pembina under Captain John Pope⁵ in the summer of 1849 ; Pope reported that it was desirable to establish a military post.⁶ The next move would be the negotiation of a treaty with the Indians to purchase the land. The negotiation was planned for 1851, and there was much excitement among the *métis*, for, with the curious ambivalence of their race, they hoped in virtue of their maternal descent to partake of the benefits of the treaty. The anticipation also drew many to Pembina, and Belcourt's mission began well.

Thus the illicit trade in Red River continued because Kittson was still very much in business and because the import of goods from St. Peter's could not be stopped. The traders had a great stock of goods imported for the troops to be worked off ; this went into the illicit trade. Kittson, it is true, was finding the Company's competition severe and was, as always, ready to sell out if the Company would make a reasonable offer. If it

¹ D.5/21, Belcourt to Simpson, February 11, 1848 ; M.H.S., Sibley Papers, Belcourt to Kittson, January 15, 1848.

² D.4/37, Simpson to the Archbishop of Quebec, March 3, 1848 ; same to Belcourt, March 3, 1848.

³ D.5/21, Archbishop of Quebec to Simpson, March 14, 1848 ; D.4/37, Simpson to Christie, April 23, 1848.

⁴ Woods, " Pembina Settlement ", p. 28.

⁵ John Pope (1822-92), graduated from West Point in 1842 ; served in Mexican War ; on survey duty in Minnesota in 1849-51. Brigadier and general in Civil War.

⁶ Pope, " Report of an Exploration of the Territory of Minnesota ", p. 31.

chose not to, however, he was confident that he could carry on.¹ The Company made no offer, but continued to fight him from Pembina Post, and in the winter of 1848-49 sent Chief Factor J. E. Harriott² to travel the borderland from Pembina to Fort Ellice to ensure that the wandering half-breed and *métis* traders were outbid, and that the Indians' furs came in to the Company's posts.³ Harriott chose to try to finish the game, and raised the price given for prime furs; Kittson had thought he would not dare, but it had been done. The inevitable results followed: furs were drawn over great distances, and more *métis* entered the trade. But Kittson held on grimly, sending for more hard cash to meet the competition.⁴ It was a return to the methods of the days of competition with the Nor' Westers, and there was a danger that the Company would find itself using the half-breeds and *métis*, as Kittson did, to collect furs from the Indians for re-sale to it. To do so would be to make them legitimate traders and to forfeit its own position as exclusive trader. But it was to be alleged that Harriott had authorized *métis* to buy furs for him.⁵

As mounting evidence of illicit trading came in during the winter, John Ballenden became more deeply worried.⁶ Indirect methods of stopping the trade had been abandoned; not being Governor of Assiniboia as Christie had been, he could not himself institute direct methods; competition seemed to be spreading, not ending, the evil. Only one other recourse remained, and indeed was made more certain and inviting by the recent separation of the government from the Company. That was the resort to legal action in the courts of Assiniboia, re-inforced as these were by the presence of the pensioners. Ballenden resolved that he must use this method, and had one Pierre Guillaume Sayer,⁷ with three others, committed for trial in the General Quarterly Court of Assiniboia on a charge of illegal trafficking in furs.⁸ A clear judicial decision that trading in furs by private individuals was illegal

¹ M.H.S., Sibley Papers, Kittson to Sibley, August 24, 1848.

² John Edward Harriott. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, II, 216-17.

³ D.5/23, Harriott to the Governor, Chief Factors and Chief Traders, November 21, 1848.

⁴ M.H.S., Sibley Papers, Kittson to Sibley, August 30, 1848, and April 29, 1849; D.5/25, Christie to Simpson, May 29, 1849.

⁵ *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company . . . 1857*, p. 310.

⁶ D.5/24, Ballenden to Simpson, January 16, 1849.

⁷ Pierre Guillaume Sayer, *métis*, son of John Sayer, a "proprietor" of the North West Company. See Morice, *Dictionnaire historique . . .*, p. 277.

⁸ D.5/25, Christie to Simpson, May 29, 1849.

would clear the air of the propaganda of recent years concerning free trade and political rights, and strengthen the Company's hand against the swarming free traders who threatened to destroy the monopoly as termites riddle a spruce stump.

The trial of Guillaume Sayer was to be held at the session of the Quarterly Court on May 17, 1849—Ascension Day, it was noted in St. Boniface. The *métis* were known to be greatly excited, and as neither the hunt nor the boat brigades had left the Settlement, they were idle and in full force. They were indeed being organized by a committee or council of the "nation", of which committee Louis Riel, *dit l'Irlande*, bore the name best known to history, if he was not then the principal leader. Their purpose was to prevent the trial and to assert a right to freedom of trade in furs. Some, it was said, had gone to Rev. G. A. Belcourt at Pembina and got a letter which was addressed to " -Ireland [Riel], and which he read at the Catholic Church, the Sunday before the meeting of the Court, adding 'that it was expected every man, would come Armed and fully prepared, to assert their rights' ".¹ For fear of provoking a clash with the excited *métis*, Governor Caldwell decided not to call out the pensioners to protect the Court. They alone could do no more than man Fort Garry, and the magistrates had advised him that the Scots and the English half-breeds would not act as special constables in a suit for illicit trading. Such, he asserted later, was the ground for his decision in this respect ;² but his critics pointed out that had he decided to parade the pensioners, he would have been at a loss for an officer to command them, as Captain Foss was still suspended and Caldwell himself had to preside at the Court.

The Court therefore proceeded to sit without the protection of the military force so hardly obtained. The session opened quietly ; the *métis*, though assembled from all their settlements, were at Mass across the river in St. Boniface. Sayer was not present and the Court began to deal with the docket. First was the suit of Madame Laronde *vs.* Thomas Pixley, for cutting wood on the plaintiff's land, next that of Public Interest *vs.* George Dahl, that of Public Interest *vs.* William Smith, pensioner, the latter charged with selling beer to the Indians ; then those of Antoine Ploofe *vs.* William Smith, pensioner, and Louis Ploofe *vs.* George Anderson, both cases of assault. But when the defendant in the case of the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company *vs.* Pierre Guillaume Sayer was called, the defendant was still not in Court. Mass was over, and Riel had addressed the *métis* from the cathedral steps,

¹ D.5/25, Christie to Simpson, May 29, 1849.

² A.11/95, Caldwell to Governor and Committee, August 2, 1849.

as the captains of militia had done in Quebec, and as his son was to do twenty years later. He urged them to free Sayer and win freedom of trade.¹ Meanwhile the Court had adjourned for the mid-day meal and re-convened. Sayer was still not present. When the Sheriff (Alexander Ross) went in search of him, it was undoubtedly to tell the *métis* that they might appoint a delegation to represent Sayer. Then, runs the Court record, "James Sinclair, Peter Garrioch and many others presented themselves as Delegates from a great number of Armed Half Breeds who were outside the court".² The private traders of 1844-46 had undertaken to express the protest of the *métis*. Whether Sinclair and the others had aided Riel and the other French leaders in the preparation of the demonstration is not known; it is possible, in the light of what happened, that they joined the movement to keep it on what might, in view of the threats the *métis* in arms were uttering, be termed "constitutional lines". It was said later, indeed, that Sinclair was "forced" to play the part he did,³ and Sheriff Ross was to assert in his account of the scene that only Sinclair's calm leadership of the half-breeds prevented the more violent elements breaking up the Court, releasing Sayer and running Recorder Thom out of the country.⁴ However that may have been, Sinclair was pursuing a clear course; he intended that the *métis* should be formally heard by the Court. From the crowd of some two to three hundred armed men outside the Court shouted threats to shoot the Recorder and ride down his colleagues could be heard. One Pierre Bruce was heard to boast that he would shoot the Recorder on the Bench.⁵ But Sinclair went resolutely ahead on the course he had taken as "Chief of the Half breeds".

He first handed the Court a paper which apparently said that he and his companions appeared as "The Delegates of the People". They were told by Recorder Thom, who with admirable nerve shed none of his legal

¹ Tassé, *Les Canadiens de L'Ouest*, I, 370; A.11/95, Caldwell to British Chargé d'Affaires at Washington, July 31, 1849 (enclosure to letter from Caldwell to Governor and Committee, August 2, 1849).

² The account of the Sayer trial in the text is summarized from the report in P.A.M., Records of the General Quarterly Court of Assiniboia; and from an account by Alexander Ross in P.A.B.C., Ross Papers. For a copy of the latter I am indebted to Miss D. Geneva Lent of Victoria.

³ D.5/25, Christie to Simpson, May 29, 1849.

⁴ P.A.B.C., Ross Papers, Report of A. Ross.

⁵ D.5/26, Caldwell to Simpson, November 28, 1849. Pierre Bruce was one of three of that name in Red River in 1849. Baptiste was absent at this time; see *H.B.S.*, XVI, 353-4.

pedantry in the midst of this near-riot, that they could not be received in a court of justice in that capacity. Thom also asserted the right of the Company to exclusive trade under the Charter. Sinclair replied that the Charter had been challenged by many eminent authorities and handed in a copy of *The Times* of August, 1848,¹ as authority for his statement. Isbister's work was already having its effect in Red River. After further discussion, the Court offered to have Sinclair appear as Sayer's counsel, or as foreman of the jury with Garrioch a member. The delegation withdrew to consider these offers. Then Sinclair re-appeared with Sayer, and proceeded to act as counsel for him ; he challenged five of the jury then empanelled, and the names of eleven others proposed. When the jury was finally empanelled, there were seven English names and five French, one of these, François Bruneau,² being that of a member of the *métis* committee. These jurors sat in the box with their powder horns and shot pouches still at their belts.

If the procedure was unorthodox, the result was a fair compromise, creditable to both sides. The trial began with the evidence of Magnus Linklater,³ postmaster in the Company's service, who deponed that Sayer, on bringing his furs to trade and on being questioned, freely said that he had traded some and hunted others. Sinclair cross-examined without notable result. Louison Sayer, son of the defendant, said that he knew of his father killing no more than one red fox, but that he had exchanged presents with his relations, liquor for furs. (This, of course was the Indian concept of trade, which the *métis* shared.) The next two witnesses, Antoine Morin and Aléxis Goulet, said that Chief Factor Harriott, the Company's travelling opposition, had told them to bring any furs they might trade to him. This evidence is not to be dismissed, but to be taken as an indication of how the competitive trade was drawing the Company's agents into its toils. Sayer himself said that Harriott in

¹ Presumably this was *The Times* for August 19, 1848, which contains a report of the debate in the House of Commons on the proposed grant of Vancouver Island to the Hudson's Bay Company. The critics of the proposal advanced A. K. Isbister's argument that the Charter was invalid as its enforcement for seven years by Act of Parliament in 1690 had not been renewed. Government speakers defending the proposal, were forced to admit that the Company's conduct in Red River was still under enquiry ; that is, Governor Caldwell's report had not yet been received, or indeed prepared, at the time of the debate. Sinclair was challenging the jurisdiction of the General Court by putting this copy of *The Times* in evidence.

² François Bruneau (? -1865) ; see Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 66-7.

³ See p. 211, n. 1.

giving him credit had forbidden him to trade with Indians, but had said nothing about half-breeds or *métis*. But Ballenden denied this, declaring that when he himself had given Sayer "debt", he had told him that if he could not pay in furs, the Company would take salt (which was manufactured at Lake Winnipegosis). He also said that it was only on his recommendation that Harriott had had anything to do with the defendant, a man, he alleged, of very indifferent character.

Recorder Thom then summed up the evidence, and reminded the jury of the rights of the Company under the Charter. The jury withdrew and after some time returned with their verdict. "That Pierre Guillaume Sayer is guilty of Trading Furs". The foreman, Donald Gunn,¹ followed this with a recommendation for mercy "as it appeared that he thought he had a right to trade as he and others were under the impression that there was a free trade". Ballenden at once said that he was satisfied with the verdict and willingly acceded to the recommendation of the jury, and added that he would drop the charges against the other three defendants.

So ended the Sayer trial in the Quarterly Court. Ballenden had won what he wanted, a clear verdict from the courts of Assiniboia; it was, moreover, a verdict from a local jury satisfactory to the defendant's representative and half composed of his compatriots. There Ballenden was content to stay proceedings; no sentence of any kind was imposed on Sayer. The chartered rights of the Company to the exclusive trade could not have been vindicated with greater fairness and moderation, or with more emphatic clarity. Yet when Sayer and his friends went out to the crowd assembled outside, and made it known that he had not been sentenced and that the other three would not be tried, the *métis* drew one simple, instant and irrevocable conclusion, that the trade in furs was free! The shout went up "Vive la liberté! La Commerce est libre!".² The guns loaded for conflict were fired for joy, and the tumultuous mob streamed off rejoicing. And from then on the fur trade in the Red River District was in fact a free, competitive trade. John Ballenden's legal victory was a legal victory merely.

XIV

The Sayer trial was the outcome of five years of agitation, suppressed only by the almost accidental presence of Imperial troops for two years of

¹ Donald Gunn; see *H.B.S.*, I. 441: and Wallace, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, I, 251.

² P.A.B.C., Ross Papers. Report of A. Ross.

the five. The agitation was not wholly over after May 17, 1849, but with the Sayer trial the strange fur trade colony of Red River had ended the first phase of its fifty years' history and had entered upon the second. The first phase was one of a monopolistic fur trade and a subordinate colony, the second one of a competitive trade in which the Company and private trader, and the Company and colonist, lived in the tolerant equilibrium of a temporary partnership, each knowing that the conditions of the equilibrium could not last, yet each prepared to accept the relationship as long as its benefits were reciprocal and the conditions of the equilibrium were respected by both partners. And in fact only the coming of the Upper Canadians in and after 1857 was to disturb, and finally destroy, the informal and slovenly balance of forces reached in the Sayer trial and its aftermath.

It was soon apparent—every one at all informed in Red River must have known it all along—that a free trade was only one of the objects of the committee of the *métis*. They had taken the propaganda of the private traders, reinforced it with some Papineau nationalism from Lower Canada, and made it a programme. They were to make their own statement of that programme to Simpson when he reached Red River in June. But the Council of Assiniboia, when it met on May 31 to review the events of May 17, was able to formulate accurately enough the aims of the *métis* :

“ 1st. The immediate removal of Mr. Recorder Thom from the Settlement.

2nd. The conducting of all judicial business through the medium of a judge who would address the Court in the French as well as the English language.

3rd. The rescinding of the existing law respecting all imports from the United States of America.

4th. The infusion into the Council of Assiniboia of a certain proportion of Canadian and half breed members.

5th. A free trade in furs.”¹

The Council took note of these objects and unanimously agreed that the personal liberty and security of the Recorder must be assured but, as he was willing to use both French and English in Court, that he should thereafter do so. The matter of duties on American imports was stood over until the next meeting, when the duties, except for the exemption of stoves, were made uniform at four per cent. But the composition of the Council was a matter coming only within the competence of the Governor and Committee of the Company, and the Council merely

¹ Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 352.

undertook to refer it to them with a recommendation, presumably to be a favourable one. Finally, the subject of free trade in furs was one, the Council declared, with which only Crown and Parliament could deal. So far as the Council could, apart from abjectly surrendering Thom to be escorted to the border by a troop of *métis* buffalo hunters, it had accepted the programme of the *métis*.

The opposition of the *métis* to Thom as Recorder had come to the surface for the first time. The reason for it is stated directly in none of the surviving documents, but it may easily be conjectured. Before he came to Red River in 1839 Thom had been an outspoken and effective critic of the *patriotes* who followed Papineau in Lower Canada. His anti-French reputation followed him ; the annual engagement of Canadian labourers by the Company, the communications of the Roman Catholic clergy, the occasional French Canadian migrant to Red River, such as Louis Riel, ensured that Thom's political and racial views would be known and discussed in Red River. He had also incurred the hostility of the private traders at the beginning of the agitation by the sharpness of the legal opinions and the draftmanship with which he had supported Governor Christie. These two grounds of dislike and distrust, perhaps inflamed by the pomposity and pedantry of the man, had fused into the implacable dislike the *métis* sometimes developed towards a stranger to their ways. They were, in 1849 and after, flatly and unshakably resolved that Thom, though he were to speak with pentecostal virtuosity, should not sit again in the courts of Red River.¹

That there was much unreasoning prejudice in their resolve is apparent, but the demand for a judge who could use the French language was not in itself unreasonable. The *métis* had long had Cuthbert Grant as their own magistrate in petty sessions and were themselves summoned as jurymen to serve in the General Quarterly Court. But it was desirable that when they appeared in that Court—and they were fond of litigation—they should be understood by the chief legal officer of the Court, and that he should be understood by them.

The demand that some French Canadians and *métis* be appointed to the Council was also reasonable. The Council exercised the local legislative power ; the French and *métis*, forming one half the Settlement, had as much right as their neighbours to have councillors who knew their needs and spoke their language. The fact had already been recognized since 1836 in the appointments of Bishop Provencher and Cuthbert Grant, but of the French-speaking members the Bishop was now old, and Grant was no longer the man he had been.

¹ See p. 208.

Both the demand for a French-speaking judge and for representation on the Council were, however, made for sentimental as well as practical reasons. They were an expression of what can only be called "nationalism", a nationalism that was French in its demand for equality with the English and *métis* in its sense of local corporate identity. The Settlement was an Anglo-French colony, a European-Indian community, and the *métis*, excluded from public office like the English half-breeds, were only demanding that the institutions of the Colony should reflect its ethnic composition. In so doing, they spoke for the English half-breeds as well as for themselves, as they were to do again in 1869 under a son of Riel; and they also revealed another facet of the agitation of 1845-49. It was to a degree the outcome of the frustration and restlessness of the Colony's younger generation of mixed blood. The white fathers, the Councillors, were old men; the Company's officers, with rare exceptions like William Sinclair, brother of James, were Europeans. To give the *métis* and half-breeds representation on the Council, to tolerate a free trade in furs, would be to open the gates of opportunity to most of the young men of Red River.

These were the motives, as well as the objects, which had led the *métis* to organize the council of the nation, and which led them, when Simpson reached Red River in June, to press upon him a petition signed by ten *métis*.¹ In this, as in the trial, James Sinclair was their spokesman. The petition contained—presumably it was the origin of—the same demands that the Council of Assiniboia had considered. Simpson, it may be supposed, had discussed intently with Ballenden, Caldwell, Ross and others the character and motives of the rising of May; he may even have discussed them with the leaders of the *métis*. It is certain that he was convinced of the need for swift and conciliatory action. He persuaded Thom to abstain from acting as Recorder; the decision was voluntary, if the persuasion of a Simpson may be considered less than an order.² Thom merely abstained from exercising his office; he did not resign or cease to draw his salary of £700 a year. Simpson also decided that the composition of the Council must be modified as the *métis* wished. He sought Bishop Provencher's advice as to which of the *métis* would make suitable Councillors;³ the Bishop was a little embarrassed by the

¹ D.5/25, James Sinclair to Simpson, June 14, 1849, with a petition of "Willm. McMalen Louis Rielle Pascal Berland Baptiste Fairjeu Baptiste Larocque Antoine Morein Louis Letendre Solomon Amelin Urbain Delorme Willm. McMillan" dated June 2, 1849.

² D.4/39, Simpson to W. McMillan et al., June 15, 1849.

³ D.5/25, Provencher to Simpson, June 27, 1849. The Bishop recommended

request.¹ Simpson then recommended to the Governor and Committee the appointment of mixed bloods to the Council, to the number of six.² In short, Simpson was ready to concede the political programme of the *métis*, except the demand for free trade. That, apparently, like the Council of Assiniboia, he referred to the highest authority in the Company.

As result of Simpson's hurried acquiescence, peace was temporarily restored in the Settlement. The Governor-in-chief, with Eden Colville as an interested companion, went on to meet the Council of the Northern Department at Norway House; the hunters left for the plains, the tripmen embarked in the brigades. The Settlement was rid of its turbulent elements for the season, and drowsed through another Red River summer. It was a year of abundant rain; the rivers were high, the crops were good, and when the hunt came in, it was with plenty of plains provisions and buffalo robes. How thoroughly the *métis* were reconciled to the government was revealed when the Swampies of the Indian village began to dance and threaten trouble over the arrest of some deserters from the brigades. They counted on the help of the council of the *métis* whom they had supported in May, but the experienced old Indian trader, Sheriff Alexander Ross, was able to reduce them to order by swearing in special constables among the *métis* and half-breeds. Confronted with this evidence of a united Settlement, the Swampies subsided at once.³ But the meaning of this was that when the *métis* were aroused, as they had been in May, to oppose them was, in the absence of an effective military force, to pit one half the Settlement against the other and risk civil war. That had been the fundamental fact of the Sayer trial, as it was to be of the Red River Resistance twenty years later.

In the meantime, Governor Caldwell had collected the answers to his enquiries and despatched his report to the Colonial Secretary. The Governor of Assiniboia wrote: "... the conclusion I have arrived at, is highly favorable to the Hudson's Bay Company: their fostering care in

"Narcisse Marion et Maximilien Dauphiné tous deux de la fourche... François Bruneau et Salomon Hamelin de la fourche et Pascal Berland de la prairie du cheval blanc". They were all good choices, but Marion was father-in-law to Norman Kittson, and Hamelin and Berland at least were members of the committee which had organized the May rising.

¹ D.5/25, Ballenden to Simpson, June 29, 1849.

² D.4/70, Simpson to Governor and Committee, June 30, 1849.

³ D.5/26, Ross to Caldwell, August 22, 1849 (enclosure to Caldwell to Simpson, November 28, 1849).

times of difficulty over all classes of the community has been proverbial ; their conciliatory manner of proceeding even under aggravated circumstances remarkable ; and their consideration towards the poor in keeping down the prices of goods and food, praiseworthy.”¹ If the terms were perhaps a bit heavy-handed, the substance was true. But the favourable verdict was not to go unchallenged. John McLaughlin returned to England by Company ship in 1849 with a scandalous and slanderous report written in 1846 on the conduct of the Company and its officers.² This he had proposed in 1846 to use in *The Nation*, of which his uncle, Charles Gavin Duffy, was editor. But the Company had been warned and launched a suit for libel ; it was dismissed on a technicality, but served its purpose of silencing McLaughlin both in 1846 and again in 1850.³ McLaughlin, however, in a letter to Earl Grey challenged the impartiality and creditability of Crofton, Griffiths and Caldwell.⁴ This necessitated a detailed counter from Simpson, which Pelly used to refute McLaughlin’s charges. Governor Pelly also answered to Grey’s satisfaction the old charge, first made by Kittson in 1846, and forwarded by Washington to London in 1849, that the Company was using liquor in the trade. The Company, wrote Pelly, did not use liquor in trade ; it did sometimes follow the old custom of the *regale*.⁵ Grey was now satisfied that there was no sufficient reason for the Government itself to begin an enquiry into the conduct by the Company of its government and commerce under the Charter. There remained the possibility that an enquiry might be begun in Parliament, but Isbister and his friends did not, by previous agreement with Pelly, press that line of action.⁶

Isbister’s challenge to the validity of the Charter itself was still to be

¹ A.11/95, Caldwell to Grey, March 22, 1849 (enclosure to letter from Caldwell to Governor and Committee, March 28, 1849).

² A.10/21, “Synopsis for publication”, enclosure to McLaughlin to Governor and Committee, dated Belfast, February 14, 1846.

³ D.5/27, Barclay to Simpson, January 11, 1850. For a report on the case which came before the Recorder at the Central Criminal Court on January 8, 1850, see *The Times* (London) for January 9, 1850. See also John McLaughlin’s letter to the editor of *The Daily News* (London) in the issue for January 22, 1850.

⁴ A.13/4, McLaughlin to Grey, January 16, 1850 (enclosure to letter from Merivale to Pelly, dated Colonial Office, January 31, 1850).

⁵ *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson’s Bay Company . . . 1857*, pp. 370-1, Pelly to Grey, March 9, 1850.

⁶ A.13/4, Resolution of the House of Commons calling for an enquiry into the legal rights of the Company, July 5, 1849 (enclosure to letter from Merivale to Pelly, dated Downing Street, August 23, 1849). Apparently the resolution was not pressed.

faced. Grey had referred the question to the Law Officers of the Crown, and had received their written opinion that the Charter was entirely valid. The only other, and the final, test, they advised, was the submission of the question to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.¹ This Grey was not prepared to have the government do, but he did inform Isbister that he and his friends were free to do so. Isbister declined.² That he should have refused to enter upon a litigation which would have cost thousands of pounds is understandable; that he was also aware that researches which might be very useful for publicity might have little validity as legal evidence may be surmised. The Company thus, in the same year in which the weakness of its officers and subordinate government in Red River had resulted in extensive concessions to the rebellious *métis*, was in London fully supported in all its claims to the government, soil and exclusive trade of Rupert's Land. The completeness of its legal rights was now in sharp contrast with their practical abrogation in the region where they were to be exercised. The Company, after 1849, was like a soldier recovered from a wound but bearing a bullet in his body, a weight, a nuisance by long use to become a familiar, almost a friendly companion, but to remain an ever-present reminder of death and a threat of renewed pain and infection.

The Governor and Committee had been digesting the despatches from the Red River District even as they learned that the attack on the Company and the Charter had come to nothing. It was therefore with a consciousness of the strength of their legal position that they drafted their instructions for 1850 for that District. They refused to dismiss Thom on the grounds that he had done "no more than his duty in expounding the law". They felt "the independence of the Judges to be so essential to the due administration of justice that, admitting for a moment that they may have the power of removing a Judge from his situation, it must be an extraordinarily strong case that would justify them in exercising that power".³ As to the appointment of half-breeds to the Council of Assiniboia, they demurred, doubting whether any of the *métis* would have the necessary education. The wisdom of consulting Bishop Provencher as to nominations was questioned. But they did favour an increase of the French element, and ordered that Rev. Louis Laflèche, who had been suggested by Provencher and recommended by Simpson, should be appointed to the Council.⁴ Laflèche had served as missionary

¹ D.5/27, A. Colville to Simpson, January 25, 1850.

² *Hudson's Bay Company* . . . 1850, pp. 13-14, Isbister to Grey, May 13, 1850.

³ A.6/28, fo. 77-77d., Barclay to Caldwell, November 30, 1849.

⁴ A.6/28, fo. 125, Governor and Committee to Simpson, April 12, 1850.

at Ile-à-la-Crosse, and had become Provencher's Vicar-General. In 1850 and 1851 he was to go with the hunt to the plains. An intense and resolute missionary, he was to miss the Bishopric of St. Boniface, only to become in later years the famous *ultramontane* Bishop of Trois Rivières.¹ On the Council of Assiniboia he was to show himself an active and influential member.

On the question of a free trade the Governor and Committee stood firm ; no legal right of the Company could be surrendered. As to how these rights were to be maintained they were perfectly clear. Competition must be increased, and the officers of the government of Assiniboia must exhibit some firmness. In view of the deplorable scene at Sayer's trial, this would now be difficult. " In consequence of the submission to physical force, and the concession to the imperative demands of the disaffected half-breeds, the difficulty of establishing subordination to the law has been much increased, and can be overcome only by an adequate military force being kept constantly in Fort Garry." ² This they had decided to attempt, and had approached the Colonial Office again. They had failed to obtain regular troops, but the Colonial Office had agreed to increase the Company of Pensioners to a hundred and fifty and had arranged to forward at once a second party of pensioners, twenty men, with women and children.³ Somewhat sternly the Deputy-Governor, Andrew Colvile, in a private letter, requested Simpson not to be so sceptical of the utility of the pensioners, for Simpson had expressed what had become the fixed view of their quality in Red River.⁴ But rather than approve a proposal of Simpson that the Company itself raise a force of a hundred men at a cost of £1200 a year—probably the only way of maintaining the Charter in Red River—it would be better, as Sir John Pelly had already declared, to license private traders and buy their furs at a commission.⁵ In these ways the ultimate authority in the Company sought to restore its position in Red River. The consequences of May 17, 1849, were not admitted, but neither was a force really capable of quelling the *métis* provided. It was an equipoise of two powers, Company and *métis*, that was being brought into being, not a restoration of the old power of the Company that was being carried out.

¹ Rumilly, *Lasfèche et son temps*.

² A.6/28, fo. 109d., Governor and Committee to Simpson, March 25, 1850.

³ Ibid.

⁴ D.5/28, A. Colvile to Simpson, April 12, 1850.

⁵ D.5/26, Pelly to Simpson, October 26, 1849.

XV

One effective decision had been taken in 1849, however ; that was to attempt to repair the damage caused by the agitation for a free trade by having the Governor of Rupert's Land reside in the Settlement during the winter. This Simpson had done intermittently from 1823 to 1835 ; thereafter the only representative of the Company in the government of the Colony during the months of isolation and the presence of the hunters and the tripmen had been the Governor of Assiniboa, in reality only Chief Factors Finlayson and Christie in charge of the Red River District. The want of the presence and influence of the Company's chief officer in North America had been felt as the troubles with the private traders developed.¹ The separation of the government of the Colony from the trade had still further diminished the influence of the Company in the Settlement. On August 30, 1849, Ballenden wrote with respect to the rising of May : " Either you or Mr. Colvile *must* winter here to keep the Councillors & Governor in order—an inferior cannot, a superior in rank might ".² It had in fact been decided that Eden Colvile, already made associate Governor of Rupert's Land, should pass two or three winters in Red River in the expectation that his presence would quiet the restive elements in the Settlement and restore the tone of government in Assiniboa. The changes taking place on the Pacific coast may have contributed to the decision also.

It is not clear just what consideration had inspired Colvile's appointment. In 1846 Simpson had noted the need of a resident senior governor and in 1848 he was apparently contemplating retirement.³ The reasons for his doing so are obscure ; they may have been Lady Simpson's restlessness at Lachine and her pining for her own folk in England ; it may have been the uncertainty which hung over the future of the Company ; it may have been the desire to begin the life of a landed gentleman in Scotland. Whatever the reasons, the Governor and Committee were sympathetic and agreed that Eden Colvile should be associated with Simpson in the Governorship of Rupert's Land.⁴

Eden Colvile was born in 1819, the fourth, and only surviving son of Andrew Colvile,⁵ Deputy Governor the Hudson's Bay

¹ D.5/23, Christie to Simpson, November 28, 1848.

² D.5/25, Ballenden to Simpson, August 29-30, 1849.

³ D.4/68, Simpson to Governor and Committee, July 23, 1846.

⁴ D.5/22, Pelly to Simpson, April 15, 1848.

⁵ Wedderburn, *The Wedderburn Book*.

Company since 1839. The younger Colville was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, from which he graduated in 1841.¹ In 1844 he came to Lower Canada to manage the settlement and development of the Seignury of Beauharnois for the London Land Company.²

That body was a revised and limited form of the North American Colonial Association of Ireland. The Association had been incorporated on September 9, 1835, and, after some uncertainty, became active in 1838, with a capital of £300,000 and Lord Fitzwilliam as Governor.³ In 1839 there was some further re-organization; Fitzwilliam⁴ was still Governor, but Andrew Colville became Deputy Governor, and among the new Directors were the Earl of Durham, George Simpson, and Edward Gibbon Wakefield. And in August Edward Ellice, Jr.,⁵ sold the Seignury of Beauharnois for transfer to the Association.⁶ The Association had been seized on, in short, to implement a scheme of Wakefield's to capitalize the value of the unsettled lands of Beauharnois by means of local land banks. The more speculative elements of the scheme were eliminated in the re-organization of the Association in 1841 as the London Land Company, but that body became involved in the cutting of the first Beauharnois canal, begun in 1844.

Thereafter it has not been possible to follow the fortunes of the London Land Company, but the obscurity which clouds its history, and the resumption of the Seignury by the Ellices in 1851 suggest that it did not prosper.

Perhaps the appointment of the son of an important supporter of the enterprise and a friend of the original proprietor of Beauharnois indicated that there was some cause for anxiety as early as 1844. However that may be, the young Colville quickly identified himself with the fortunes of the country. In November 1844 he was elected member for the County of

¹ Luard, *Graduati Cantabrigienses*, "Eden Colville Trinity College A.B. 1841".

² Wallace, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, I, 129.

³ MacDonnell, "Gibbon Wakefield and Canada subsequent to the Durham Mission, 1839-1842", pp. 120-1, 133-4; P.A.C., Ellice Papers, A-19, 547.

⁴ Charles William Wentworth Fitzwilliam (1786-1857), third Earl, 1833; a Whig and free trader.

⁵ *The Montreal Gazette*, June 11, 1839. John George Lambton (1792-1840), first Earl; Whig reformer; author of *Durham's Report*. Edward Gibbon Wakefield (1796-1862), served under Durham in Canada; a colonial theorist. Edward Ellice, Jr. (1810-80), son of Rt. Hon. Edward (Bear) Ellice.

⁶ P.A.C., Ellice Papers, A-19, 547.

Beauharnois, as a supporter of Governor Metcalfe's¹ administration and of responsible government as defined by the Governor, and as "the representative of the largest proprietary in the county".² At the opening of the session in 1845 he was seconder in the 'Debate on the Address'.³ In the same year he married Anne, daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel John Maxwell of Montreal.⁴ What ability Colville had to add to his position as son of a wealthy and influential man, or how he fared as manager of the interests of the London Land Company, does not appear. That he was successful in his task is doubtful, and the historian of Beauharnois says flatly that the Seignury reverted to the Ellices "because of the poor management of the agent Colville".⁵ While this may be too blunt a statement, it perhaps indicates that by 1848 Eden Colville was disposed to listen to Simpson's suggestion that he join him in the direction of the Company's affairs, and that his father and friends felt that it would be well to shift this young man-of-affairs in the making to another if even more arduous sphere. As for his character, Simpson noted that he possessed "general information, business habits and conciliatory disposition".⁶ The impression Colville gives is that of the young commercial patrician, of good education and training, blessed with fair ability and complete assurance. In time experience and the habit of command would make him a competent executive. That Eden Colville was to become; as Governor of Rupert's Land, his progress towards competence was evident. He held many directorships after his return to England, and from 1872 to 1880 he was Deputy Governor, from 1880 to 1889 Governor, of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Such was the man whom Simpson sounded out early in 1848, and who that summer accompanied the Governor to Red River and Norway House on what was a trip of inspection. Colville returned to England in the fall of 1848, and as all parties were agreed on the arrangement that Colville should become Simpson's associate and deputy, the Governor and Committee on January 3, 1849, "Resolved to appoint Mr. Eden Colville a Governor of Rupert's Land to preside at all Councils of Chief Factors, and to attend to all other duties of Governor in the absence of

¹ Charles Theophilus Metcalfe (1785-1846), first Baron; Governor-General of British North America, 1843-45.

² *The Montreal Gazette*, October 3, 1844.

³ *Ibid.*, December 5, 1844.

⁴ *Annual Register . . . for the Year 1893*, p. 162.

⁵ Leduc, *Beauharnois*, p. XII.

⁶ D.5/24, Pelly to Simpson, January 12, 1849, with attached note in Simpson's hand, initialed "G.S.", and dated September 7, 1848.

Sir George Simpson. It was also Resolved to appoint Mr. Eden Colville a member of the Council of Assiniboia".¹ It was with this commission that Colville once more went to Norway House with Simpson in 1849, and continued on across the Rockies to Vancouver Island.

So far his appointment seems to have been determined by Simpson's plans. At what point it was actually decided that Colville should reside in Red River does not appear. His appointment as Councillor of Assiniboia probably indicates that it was intended from the first. His father, Andrew Colville, was looking for servants for him before January, 1850,² and it is evident that the decision was made in 1849;³ Mrs. Colville was ready to come to Red River in the summer of 1850. It may certainly be assumed that the Sayer rising and the unrest which followed, confirmed, if they did not suggest, the decision, whatever its exact date. Thus, when travel became possible in the spring of 1850, Colville came over the mountains, to reach Norway House in June. When the Council of the Northern Department was concluded, he left for Fort William to meet Mrs. Colville, and returned with her, to arrive at Red River on August 11.

The decision to have a Governor of Rupert's Land in residence was a wise one, and Colville's arrival was none too soon. There was to be need for a steadying hand on the affairs of Red River; before Colville arrived, the free trade had run a full year unchecked except by competition, and a local scandal had caused the fragile government of Assiniboia to tremble on the verge of collapse.

The free trade had indeed ceased to be a risk and an adventure and was becoming part of the normal life of Red River. The Company was in fact beginning to take furs from private traders and *métis* without too many questions asked. And as the Company began to adjust itself to the competition of the free traders, the old course of life in Red River began to resume its accustomed way. The hard years of the late forties were over; the hunts did well despite an increasing number of clashes with the Sioux. In 1850 rain was abundant and the crops were good; the fires did not run in the fall, or threaten the full stacks of hay.

The growth of the free trade, however, was only one of the changes being imposed on the seasonal rhythm of the buffalo hunt, haying and harvest, the departure and arrival of the boat brigades. The mission churches of Red River were undergoing changes, changes which both reflected and affected the growth of the free trade and of the Settlement itself. The aged Provencher was looking for a co-adjutor, not only to

¹ A.1/66, pp. 2-3.

² D.5/27, A. Colville to Simpson, January 25, 1850.

³ D.5/25, Pelly to Simpson, April 5, 1849.

lighten his work and succeed him, but also to direct the extension of the work of the Catholic missions in the far North-West. He considered Lafèche, whom he had summoned from Athabaska, but his choice was not approved.¹ Lafèche's companion in the mission at Lake Athabaska, Father A. A. Taché, O.M.I.,² was chosen in his stead and made Bishop of Arath in *partibus infidelium* in 1850. The succession was thus assured of a mission priest who would not suffer the cause of the missions to languish.³ And the Church of England, the activities of which in the early forties had caused the Roman Catholics to extend their missions, now felt obliged to make new efforts. One such was begun in 1850. Rev. William Cockran, founder of the Lower Church and the Indian Mission, was moved to begin a mission to the Indians where Red River half-breeds might join him at Beaver Creek, west of the abandoned trading site at Portage la Prairie. He went out to the proposed location, but decided against founding a settlement there, as it lacked that junction of prairie and wooded river front which was the desideratum of Red River settlement. Cockran returned to Red River, but did not give up his intention to found a mission up the Assiniboine, and did make a beginning in 1851 at Portage la Prairie.⁴ The Company's officers viewed his ambition with dislike, for they expected the mission to become "a Nest of needy greedy private traders".⁵ And they entertained similar fears of Rev. A. Cowley's mission at Fairford between lakes Manitoba and Winnipeg, a region notorious in the free trade, and of a new one planned at White Dog (Wabassimong) on the Winnipeg River.

The Company officers' fears were only realistic; any spread of settlement, and any increase of population, would serve to augment the difficulty of keeping the free trade within bounds. When James Sinclair had sold his house and goods and left the Settlement early in 1849, it was a great relief to Ballenden and Simpson; when the latter heard Sinclair had returned to recruit a party for the California goldfields, he hopefully advised Ballenden to give Sinclair every encouragement.⁶ The population of Red River was too large for a colony subordinate to the fur trade; people, churches, schools were the growing evidence of a settled,

¹ Reardon, *George Anthony Belcourt*, p. 79.

² See p. 162, n. 2.

³ Morice, *L'Eglise Catholique*, p. 332.

⁴ D.5/28, Thom to Simpson, June 1, 1850; D.5/32, Donald Ross to Simpson, dated Red River Settlement, December 18, 1851.

⁵ D.5/32, D. Ross to Simpson, December 18, 1851.

⁶ D.5/25, Ballenden to Simpson, August 4, 1849; D.5/27, Ballenden to Simpson, March 23, 1850.

civilized way of life that was a standing threat to the regime of the fur trade.

Simpson, however, could only congratulate his old friend, Alexander Ross, when the latter informed him in June 1849 that the Presbyterian community had received word from Rev. John Bonar of the Free Kirk of Scotland that the Kirk could not supply a minister, but that they had asked the Free Kirk of Canada to do so.¹ Ross was confident that this would be done and that there would be a minister in Red River in 1850 or 1851. He and his associates therefore raised the question of a church for the minister. Simpson replied that he must refer the matter to the Governor and Committee. Ross then took the matter up with John Ballenden, who failed to settle the question and referred it to Simpson in June 1850; Simpson informed Ross that the matter would be dealt with by Governor Colvile on his arrival.² Thus the first and long drawn out phase of "the Presbyterian question" was ending. The Presbyterian community of Kildonan was at last to have a minister, not the one they had been promised, but one of their own procuring. The question now entered its second phase, a very awkward one, and this was one of the delicate questions Colvile was to find waiting for his decision. Were the Presbyterians to have the Upper Church or were they to be compelled to build a new one, as they had had to procure their own minister?

Selkirk had given the Scottish settlers a lot for their church. The site had been used since 1816, if not since 1812, as a burying ground, certainly for the dead of Seven Oaks. A church, the second, was built on it in 1833, partly from Church Missionary Society funds,³ but in the main by the sale of pews, most of them to Presbyterians, who expected a minister to replace the parson. This situation had continued until 1850; in a church largely built and owned by Presbyterians, standing on a lot granted to Presbyterian settlers and in a burying ground mostly used by Presbyterians, Anglican priests had officiated and the Liturgy of the Church of England, though modified, had been used. The Upper Church had come to be regarded as an Anglican church, and somewhat the same conditions had obtained in the building and use of the Middle Church. Bishop Anderson could not but find the situation puzzling and vexatious. The one indisputably Anglican church was the Lower

¹ Ross, *Red River Settlement*, p. 353; P.A.M., Ross Papers (C), Simpson to Ross, July 7, 1849.

² Ross, *Red River Settlement*, pp. 353-4, Simpson to Ross, July 2, 1850.

³ D.5/28, Anderson to Simpson, June 1, 1850; *Church Missionary Intelligence*, January 1850, p. 212 (quoted in Wilkinson, "Episcopate of the Right Rev. David Anderson . . .").

Church, and the Bishop might have been wise to have made it his see. He decided, however, since the incumbent of the Upper Church, Rev. John Macallum, had died late in 1849, to make that his episcopal church and see. It was this tangle of rights and purposes which Colville would have to resolve in some way that would preserve the harmony of the community.

The new Governor of Rupert's Land was to face, however, a much more serious situation when he stepped ashore at the Lower Fort on August 11, 1850. He was presented with a petition from the councillors of Assiniboia and five hundred and two English settlers. It asked that Governor Caldwell be removed.¹ The Sheriff, Alexander Ross, and Dr. John Bunn² had already resigned for want of confidence in the Governor, and the other lay Councillors threatened to do so. There was also another petition asking that Chief Factor Ballenden be restored to control of the Company's affairs.³ The government of Assiniboia, it was apparent, had broken down. And in the background was the undiminished unrest of the *métis*, made plain to Simpson when he had been in the Settlement in June in a letter signed by William McMillan, Solomon Amelin, Louis Riel and eighteen others. They protested that their demands of 1849 had been put off with promises and evasions. If this happened again, they intimated, there would be trouble. Thom, they repeated, must go, since he had used his position to abuse and insult "in open court the whole nation". They wanted representation on the Council "chosen from our nation by ourselves". Nomination by others would not do, as magistrates and councillors must have the confidence of the people. Caldwell they thought should be replaced, as "a man, who does not understand the law, & who reproaches himself for not having put us to death". This petition they presented "in the name of the nation".⁴ Simpson could only undertake to forward their requests

¹ See pp. 22-4.

² John Bunn (1800?-61), a native of Rupert's Land, was first employed by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1819 as surgeon in the ship *Eddystone*. The records show that he was stationed at various posts in the Southern Department and that he retired in 1824 to the Red River Colony where, since 1822, his father, Thomas Bunn (see p. 25), had been settled. For an outline of John Bunn's career see Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 61-2.

³ D.5/28, John Black to Simpson, August 24, 1850; Thom to Simpson, August 15, 1850. For the causes leading to Ballenden's absence see pp. cii, cv.

⁴ D.5/28, June 1, 1850 (translation). Simpson sent the original petition, in French (A.13/4, fos. 519-20), to London under cover of his letter dated July 5, 1850 (A.12/5).

to the Governor and Committee and, with respect to Caldwell, to the Colonial Office, and to counsel good temper and moderation.¹ The *métis* were not likely to practise moderation, however, since their *bête noire*, Adam Thom, had appeared again in the General Court.

The first occasion of his doing so was the case of Matheson *vs.* Thom on February 21, 1850. The plaintiff had repaired the verandah to Thom's house. A dispute as to the amount of the bill followed and was taken into court. There Thom objected to the case being heard by a jury half English and half French, and appealed to the precedent of the Sayer trial and the demand for trial by a judge who spoke the language of the defendant. He claimed, in short, that the jury should be wholly English. When the President of the Court overruled him, Thom in a rage walked out of the courtroom. The jury found against him *in absentia*, but he insisted on paying more than the Court awarded. Thom was neither rebuked nor punished for his contempt of court. So impotent was Caldwell, so disgraceful the scene, however, that Sheriff Ross declared in open court that there was neither law nor justice in Assiniboia. All the lay members of Council, and notably Ross and Bunn, now refused to act with Caldwell,² although Ross consented later to continue as Sheriff until replaced.³ It was to this appearance of Thom in court that the committee of the *métis* resentfully referred.

The second occasion for Thom's appearing in Court was the case of Foss *vs.* Pelly, and it was this case which had caused the practical break down of government in Red River which Colville had to face. On July 16 Captain Foss had sued Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Pelly,⁴ accountant at Fort Garry and his wife, and Mr. and Mrs. John Davidson, the mess steward of the Fort and his wife, for conspiracy to slander.⁵ All the magistrates refused to act with Caldwell, and the unfortunate Governor had to hold the Court alone. After a three day trial, full of scandal and marked by

¹ D.4/42, June 25, 1850.

² A.11/95, Caldwell to Governor and Committee, March 22, 1850, enclosing account of the General Court of the Governor and Council of Assiniboia, held on February 21, 1850.

³ Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 357.

⁴ Augustus Edward Pelly, clerk. His father, William Pelly, was a first cousin of Sir John Henry Pelly. A. E. Pelly was promoted to the rank of Chief Trader in 1850 and retired in 1855. He was married at York Factory by the Bishop of Rupert's Land on August 28, 1849, to Anne Rose Clouston, daughter of Edward Clouston of Smoothgrath, Orkney, and sister of Chief Trader Robert Clouston. She had landed at York Factory thirteen days earlier. They left for Red River Settlement on September 1, 1849.

⁵ P.A.M., Records of the General Quarterly Court of Assiniboia.

much confusion and disorder, Foss was awarded £300 damages from Pelly and £100 from Davidson ; the latter he forgave. The scandal which had led to the trial had deeply divided the Settlement and the verdict increased the division. The Pelly faction, made up in the main of the Protestant clergy and their wives, lost countenance painfully, along with Governor Caldwell. Those like Sheriff Ross who had no interest in the trial, saw in its mismanagement by the Governor the final proof of his incapacity.

The origins of the scandal itself went back to 1848. In that year Chief Factor John Ballenden had arrived with his wife¹ and family, as had Major Caldwell with the first party of pensioners. The Ballendens of course resided in Upper Fort Garry, and there the pensioners were quartered until their lands could be assigned and houses built for them. Major Caldwell and his family, and his second in command, Captain Foss, were admitted as guests to the officers' mess.² Foss to all intents was a bachelor, having separated from his wife some years before and, though a competent officer, was a flashy character.³ In the course of time his name was coupled with that of Mrs. Ballenden in the gossip of the Fort and of the Settlement. Sides were taken. Those who thought Foss and Mrs. Ballenden guilty of indiscretion were the officers of the Company, the clergy and their wives, with Miss Anderson, the Bishop's sister, in general the respectable and, it is to be feared, the realistic and the uncharitable. Those who thought Mrs. Ballenden had been wronged were the plainer folk and the romantics, but among them was Adam Thom.⁴

Thom was, of course, entitled to his opinion, but his friendship led Mrs. Ballenden and Foss to consult him as to how they should deal with the scandal, and Thom gave them the benefit of his legal knowledge. But when the case was being tried, Thom's legal assistance was found to be necessary and he was brought into Court. He came despite the fact that he had already advised one party. The Court accepted his assistance despite the fact that he was there, it would seem, only by the grace of a private citizen, Louis Riel, who had agreed on behalf of the *métis* that Thom might be consulted.⁵ What Thom's capacity in the Court was is

¹ Mrs. John Ballenden, née Sarah McLeod, daughter of Alexander Roderick McLeod. She married Ballenden in 1836 (E.4/1^b, fo. 248d.).

² D.5/23, Christie to Simpson, November 28, 1848.

³ MacLeod, *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*, p. 246.

⁴ D.5/28, Thom to Simpson, August 15, 1850.

⁵ So it would seem. P.A.M., Records of the General Quarterly Court of Assiniboia ; D.5/28, Thom to Simpson, August 15, 1850 ; *Report from the*

obscure, but it is evident that he dominated the proceedings from his entrance to the end of the trial. In particular he instructed the jury that to establish Mrs. Ballenden's innocence, which was not formally at issue, they must find Pelly guilty, and to put it beyond doubt, they must fine Pelly heavily.¹ This was quite to disregard the question before the Court, whether the Pellys had conspired to slander Captain Foss. There was thus plenty of reason for dissatisfaction with Caldwell who as President of the Court was responsible for a judicial proceeding of so irregular and dubious a nature. The trial served to bring to a head the discontent with Caldwell among the English settlers, a discontent they had already expressed in a petition put before Simpson in June. He had then only promised them, as he had the *métis*, to refer their complaints to the Governor and Committee. But when Foss *vs.* Pelly had taken place delay was no longer possible, and Colvile had to act at once on his own authority.

It is difficult to imagine what would have happened in Red River if Colvile had not arrived there to reside in August 1850. It may be that the constituted government would have ceased to function and an attempt would have been made by the *métis* at least to set up a provisional and representative government. Had such a government been set going, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the Company to take the government of the Settlement out of the hands of the people again. Fortunately, Colvile embodied the full prestige of the Company and proceeded to act moderately and decisively. While rebuking Ross for his intolerance, he agreed to preside at the meetings of the Council and the Quarterly Court, and persuaded Caldwell to accept this arrangement.² Thus the weight and authority of the Governor of Rupert's Land and of a son of the Deputy Governor were brought to the support of the tottering fabric of colonial government.

This exertion of rank and influence was enough to quiet, or at least quell, the troubled spirits of Red River. Caldwell professed himself content, but seems to have grumbled a good deal, and even to have begun to cultivate Riel by way of having a party to support him.³ This heavy-handed manoeuvre came to nothing, but it might have become a

Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company . . . 1857, p. 301. Riel appeared as witness on July 17. When asked if any one had offered the *métis* money to allow Thom to appear, Riel answered, "Never, never", but the questioning ended in an uproar.

¹ P.A.M., Records of the General Quarterly Court of Assiniboia; D.5/30, John Black to Simpson, January 8, 1851.

² See pp. 22-9.

³ See p. 198.

serious matter had Colvile continued as President of Council and Court. For the clergy, both Protestant and Catholic, thought Colvile's supersession of Caldwell illegal; the Protestants were Caldwell's personal friends and Provencher and Lafèche disliked, as did the *métis*, the re-union of Company and government involved in Colvile's presidency.¹ The clerical members held their peace for the time, however, and the lay Councillors withheld their resignations, while Ross continued to act as Sheriff. With the Council restored at least to formal unity, Colvile presided at two meetings, with Caldwell present, one on September 5, 1850, and one on October 16 of the same year.² Only one measure of importance was carried, the re-organization of the District of Assiniboia into three judicial districts, each with a panel of magistrates possessing summary jurisdiction in ordinary police cases and actions for debt up to five pounds.³ Among those nominated for the office of magistrate were six Canadians and *métis*, including some of those who had presented the protests of 1849 and 1850 to Simpson in the name of the *métis* nation.

As he had used his influence to stabilize the Council, so did Colvile employ it to shield Thom from attack. But he could do so only by requiring that courageous worthy to abstain from attendance at Court. When a session of the Court was held in November to try a *métis*, Riel came half an hour before the meeting to tell Colvile that the *métis* were determined to keep Thom out, and as no preparations had been made to deal with a riot, the magistrates thought it better Thom should stay away.⁴ Justice did not have to be popular in Red River, but her agents did.

With quiet restored in the Settlement, Colvile had time to devote to the Presbyterian question. Simpson had referred Ross's request, that a church be provided for the use of the minister whose coming was anticipated, to the Council of the Northern Department in July of 1850. Colvile now undertook, despite some doubts of the genuineness of the grievance, to recommend to the Council a settlement of the question of the Presbyterian church. That body had resolved that a lot in Frog Plain (Kildonan) should be granted as a site for a church, the title to be conveyed when the structure was completed. It also voted a sum of £150 for the construction of the building, the money to be paid when building began. The offer, if accepted, was to be in lieu of the rights which those who joined the new church might have in the old church lot. The use of

¹ D.5/31, Provencher to Simpson, August 8, 1851.

² Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 359, 360.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 361-2.

⁴ A.11/95, Caldwell to Pelly, November 22, 1850, and p. 199.

the burial ground of the Upper Church, however, was reserved for the Presbyterians.¹ Colville conveyed this offer to Ross and the committee acting for the Presbyterians. They at first demurred at the "looseness" with which the conditions as to conveyance of title to the lot and the payment of the money were drawn. On Colville replying that these could not be altered by him, the committee asked that the matter be referred to the Governor and Committee. They, however, had already approved Simpson's recommendation that the above terms be offered, and on May 15, 1851, Ross and his committee agreed to accept the proposed terms.² With great energy they then proceeded to raise the rest of the money for building, some six hundred pounds, and began the construction of Kildonan church. Bishop Anderson was left in possession of the Upper Church, and it seemed that the Presbyterian question, after so many years, was in a fair way to be answered. It only remained to agree on the arrangements which would be necessary when the Presbyterian congregation withdrew to its new church, such as those for the use of the burying ground around the Upper Church and the determination of the value of pews.

Colville had also to repair the damage which Foss *vs.* Pelly had done to the staff of the Company's establishment. Ballenden had gone on furlough for the year. Colville recommended that Pelly should be sent to Vancouver Island, where he thought he would be useful, and where he would be out of the way when Ballenden returned.³ John Black,⁴ chief accountant, who had also been threatened with a suit by Foss, had been put in charge of the Upper Fort. Mrs. Ballenden and family were taken to the Lower Fort to reside with the Colvilles. Captain Foss had already been recalled by the War Office, and Colville hoped to have him out of the Settlement before winter. But Foss's departure made it necessary for him to dispose of the land and other property he had acquired and this proved to be a lengthy and contentious matter.⁵ The result was that

¹ See p. 199.

² P.A.M., Ross Letters (C), E. Colville to Ross, April 16, 1851; from unpublished Mss., "The Heritage of the Selkirk Settlers", by William Douglas, Ross to Colville, May 15, 1851.

³ See p. 195.

⁴ John Black (1817-79), entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company as a clerk in 1839 and was promoted to the rank of Chief Trader in 1848. He retired in 1855. After a period filling "high and important Government offices in Australia", Black returned to the Red River Settlement about 1862. See Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 50.

⁵ See pp. 47-63, and D.5/29, Black to Simpson, November 29, 1850.

Foss spent the winter of 1850-51 in Red River, an irritation to every one including the private traders to whom he was in debt. His sojourn had the effect of precipitating the separation of Ballenden and his wife on his return, and not until Foss's departure in the spring of 1851 was the sorry business ended. His successor, Captain Joseph Hill, arrived in the summer of that year and proved himself a better choice.¹

XVI

These vexations did not in fact cloud the Governor's life unduly. Both he and Mrs. Colvile found Red River a much pleasanter place than they had anticipated. Lower Fort Garry was much more a rural residence than a commercial establishment, and had been so designed by Simpson when he had still hoped to reconcile Mrs. Simpson to residence in Red River. The new Governor could be very much the squire if he wished, and what with the supervision of the imported livestock, riding, driving and visiting, the time passed pleasantly, if a trifle dully. Colvile, indeed, found it possible to be jolly in good company: "'Laugh and get fat' should be his motto", wrote John Rae of his host in Red River.² Mrs. Colvile played the part of the squire's lady naturally, and her influence soothed the ruffled susceptibilities of the clergy and their ladies, and closed some rifts in Red River's heterogeneous community. When she and the Governor attended service in St. Boniface Cathedral, the *métis* were delighted.³ And sardonic Adam Thom, who seldom spoke of others except in satiric vein, wrote of the pair: "We have uniformly found Mr. Colvile a very agreeable man, and Mrs. Colvile a sweetly unaffected woman".⁴ Red River could easily enough be governed by rank and influence as long as the power of government was not being exerted to enforce the Company's monopoly of the fur trade, and one more winter was passing while no check was being placed on the free trade except that of competition.

Meantime the Governor and Committee had been pondering that perennial problem and the despatches informing them of the continued unrest of the *métis* and of the consequences of Foss *vs.* Pelly. One

¹ Joseph Hill, ensign in 2nd West India Regiment of Foot, 1839; lieutenant in the same, 1842-47; retired; in 1851 shown in *Army List* as Captain (local rank) for service in Hudson Bay. See p. 79, n. 3.

² *H.B.S.*, XVI, 220.

³ See p. 196.

⁴ D.5/30, Thom to Simpson, May 30, 1851.

decision they made promptly ; Thom could not continue to hold office as Recorder. Only a General Court of the Company could dismiss him and one was summoned to do so.¹ But the Governor and Committee would not yield completely to the pressure of the *métis* and in so doing deprive the Council and Court of all legal advice. They therefore ordered Colville to inform Thom that he had been dismissed as Recorder, but had been made Clerk of the Court.² It was their hope that in this capacity Thom would no longer be offensive to the *métis*, and that his legal knowledge would still be available to the Court. The hope was promptly dashed. Colville took the precaution of informing Riel of the change in Thom's status, only to be informed that the *métis* would not suffer Thom to appear in Court in any capacity.³ As a result Colville had to ask Thom not to appear in court in the future. After this, the Governor and Committee were under pressure even from the Council of the Northern Department to dismiss him. But it was not done until 1853 and Thom did not leave the colony until 1854.⁴ The opinionated law officer took his enforced idleness hardly, but there was no remedy. Simpson wrote in a kindly vein to Thom in 1851 explaining the causes of his failure, and concluding rather quaintly that in Red River an unpopular judge "has the effect of seriously disturbing the peace".⁵

On a second point the Governor and Committee were equally decisive. While they did not censure Colville for assuming the presidency of the Council and Court of Assiniboia, they did not approve it, and instructed him to re-instate Caldwell. They were determined to preserve that separation of the trade and government departments of the Colony which had been decided upon in 1846-48.⁶ Caldwell therefore once more presided at Council and Court and Colville became, as he had been intended to be, an influence in the background. The reversion was popular with the clerical members of Council and with the *métis*, among whom Caldwell had become popular and who correctly saw in the separation a weakening of the Company's position. It was well that they should be pleased. The agitation among them had not ceased, and their discontent and their aims were expressed in a petition got up in 1851 and signed by five hundred and forty colonists, the authenticity of the signatures being attested by five leading *métis*. The petition asked that

¹ A.2/3, fo. 60 ; A.1/67, p. 26.

² See Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 363.

³ See p. 208.

⁴ Bryce, "Worthies of Old Red River", p. 8.

⁵ D.4/44, Simpson to Thom, December 10, 1851.

⁶ See p. 207.

Red River be granted British liberty, a Governor appointed by the Crown, a Judge similarly appointed and able to speak English and French, power in the Governor to appoint Councillors in an emergency, the dismissal of Councillors who had forfeited public confidence or been subservient to the Company, and the removal of Thom to some other British colony.¹ Granted the premise that the colony was no longer to be subordinate to the fur trade, it was a realistic and modest petition. But the Company could not admit that the Colony had become independent of the fur trade without inviting a further increase in the free trade. It had gone a great distance in separating the government and trade, and would not willingly go further at once.

Further than this the Company was not required to go for the moment. Red River was not really prepared for self-government. Its people were still too few, still too pre-occupied with their callings, too much involved in the strong flow and ebb of the seasonal rhythm of Red River life, to maintain a political agitation, or to work any but the most simple institutions. Old Alexander Ross, who had at last resigned the shrievalty and been succeeded by his half-breed son, William Ross,² summed up the realities of the situation for Simpson. The people, he wrote, had been so much misgoverned for some years past that, in looking for a remedy, they had hit upon representative government. Ross did not think the people of the Upper Settlement (the French) capable of it, in which he did them an injustice ; but if it were to be avoided, a capable Governor must be appointed and the Council remodelled. The presence of a regular military force he did not think of great consequence. All that was needed to make a flourishing colony was a plain man of business as Governor, a judge who could speak French as well as English, and an impartial Council.³ Ross wrote as an opponent and critic of Caldwell and the clergy, both Anglican and Catholic, who, he said, controlled the existing Council. But his opinion was the sober judgment of an experienced man, and it was very much such a government which was to rule Red River quietly until 1869.

The unstated premise of Ross's observations, however, was the continuation of the free trade in furs. As a chance to make some money

¹ A.13/5, Petition said to be signed by five hundred and forty Red River people and signatures attested by "Pascal Breland, Louis Rielle, Roger Goulet, Benjamin Lagimonier, Charles Montigny"; not dated but received by Aborigines' Protection Society, October 1, 1851. (Enclosure to letter from F. Peel to Pelly, dated Colonial Office, December 30, 1851.)

² See Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 67-8.

³ D.5/31, Ross to Simpson, August 1, 1851.

and as winter employment, a tolerated free trade was necessary to keep the growing half-breed and *métis* communities quiet. And it was not altogether prejudicial to the Company, as long as it was confined to the southern districts and as long as the Company obtained most of the furs taken. The trade with Pembina was harmful, it was true, and it was still going on ; Colville and Simpson were discussing, as Christie and Simpson had done in 1845, whether it could not be limited by refusing to import goods for the private traders who engaged in the illicit traffic.¹ This was to return to indirect checks, and was not attempted. But by the end of 1851 the tide was beginning to turn in the competition with Pembina. The appointment of an American Customs officer there promised to be some check on the trans-border trade.² Pembina Post had not been particularly successful, but Kittson was feeling the strain of unslackened competition.³ Chief Factor William Mactavish⁴ was to say ten years later that if Simpson had taken Kittson into the Company's service at this time "as he could easily have done", he could have crushed all opposition.⁵ And Belcourt's mission settlement had suffered from floods in the spring of 1851, and had received a bitter setback in the fall when Governor Ramsey of Minnesota Territory negotiated a treaty with the Ojibways, but granted the *métis* only a payment of \$30,000.00 in settlement of their claims.⁶ The latter, indeed, found that they would have to pay like white men for the lands purchased from the Indians, instead of participating in the treaty payments. These two reverses greatly injured the Pembina mission, and in 1852 Belcourt removed it to higher ground in the valley of the Pembina at the edge of the Escarpment. There it thrived as St. Joseph's,⁷ but was not the aid to the free trade it would have been at Pembina. Kittson was to hang on for two seasons more, but the defeat of the Indian treaty in the Senate, the failure to obtain a military post and the relentless competition of the Company forced him to close his post and retire to St. Paul in 1854.⁸ The external stimulus to the free trade had been ended,

¹ See p. 246.

² See p. 67.

³ Rife, *Norman W. Kittson*, p. 221.

⁴ See *H.B.S.*, XVI, 24*n*.

⁵ P.A.C., Ellice Papers, A-19, 54, A. G. Dallas to E. Ellice, Jr., October 16, 1862.

⁶ See p. 77, and Rife, *Norman W. Kittson*, p. 245 ; Bond, *Minnesota and its Resources* . . . , p. 316.

⁷ Cf. Bond, *Minnesota and its Resources* . . . , p. 276.

⁸ Rife, *Norman W. Kittson*, p. 251.

but the cart trade with St. Paul continued and grew in volume year by year.

When Governor Ramsey of Minnesota and his secretary, J. W. Bond, accompanied by Rev. John Black,¹ the new Presbyterian minister, came down the Red from Pembina to the Colony in September 1851, therefore, it was almost as on a visit of state between two communities henceforth to be linked by the caravan commerce of the Red River cart brigades. This commerce, and the free trade which fed it, was the major change resulting from the agitation touched off by Kittson's coming to Pembina. But it was to a Red River that was growing quiet under the influence of the Company's concessions and the presence of the Governor of Rupert's Land. The agitation of the past seven years had in fact ended. Sociable Red River could give itself over to its main diversion, gossip. For gossip, there were the entertainment of the American visitors from across the plains, the comings and goings of the Comte de la Guiche,² back from hunting in the Rocky Mountains, the adventures of Dr. John Rae,³ back on January 10, 1852, from searching for Franklin in the Arctic, and the preaching of the new Presbyterian minister at the Frog Plain church.⁴

¹ See Bond, *Minnesota and its Resources*, pp. 317, 320. John Black (1818-82), a Scotsman educated at Delaware Academy, Delhi, New York, and at Knox College, Toronto. He was the only Presbyterian minister at Red River from 1851 until 1862. See Wallace, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, I, 52. According to Ross, *Red River Settlement*, p. 359, "Mr. Black's arrival was the signal for every flock to follow its own shepherd, and no less than 300 Presbyterians left the English church in one day".

² Count Charles de la Guiche. See *H.B.S.*, XVI, 221.

³ For Dr. Rae's remarks on his visit to the Settlement, see *H.B.S.*, XVI, 219-20.

⁴ D.5 32, A. Thom to Sir G. Simpson, dated Red River Settlement, December 15, 1851, "The Revd. Mr. Black is a man of strong intellect and earnest utterance. You cannot listen to him without feeling his power and listen to him you must, whether you will or not—novelties (are not they?) in Red River church-going. Nor is he less decidedly superior to his rivals in charity than in ability. Uninfluenced by the example of those, who had made a standing text of him and his people before his arrival, he has never, as I am assured, made any allusion whatever to any other denomination beyond praying every Sunday for the success of all missionaries of the gospel. Moreover this liberality of feeling does not, as is too often the case, arise from any want of zeal. To say nothing of his purely professional labours, he devotes the little leisure, which he leaves to himself, to the superintendence of the school, and that, for the first time in this place, with a view to the permanent improvement of education. As a proof that

There was, it is true, to be one more flurry arising out of the settlement of the Presbyterian question. As the new congregation was forming, and the trustees appointed for the purpose were preparing to divide the assets of the Upper Church between the Bishop and the withdrawing members of the congregation, Ross learned that the Bishop was planning to consecrate the burying ground.¹ The right of the Presbyterians to its use had, as noted above, been reserved. The effect of consecration would be that the burial service of the Church of England would have to be used at all interments, to which, of course, the Presbyterians could not agree. There seems to have been a genuine misunderstanding as to what the reservation meant, but Bishop Anderson does also seem to have been mistaken and in the wrong, understandable as his vexation was. He had agreed to the reservation of the rights of the Presbyterians and could not destroy the agreement by the act of consecration. So Colville and the Governor and Committee thought, and the latter instructed the Bishop not to consecrate the churchyard.² It was not in fact possible to do so until 1870, when the consent of the Kildonan congregation was obtained.

XVII

There were not many other such loose ends to be tidied up among the changes which had occurred in Red River since 1844, and none was important. The transition from the first to the second phase of Red River's brief history was now completed. But as if to mark the change, the spring of 1852 brought another of the great floods which from time to time make the Red River valley a reminiscence of the original Lake Agassiz. Hitherto the older settlers had dated events as before or after the flood of 1826. And there was some memory of other floods as far back as 1776, and there must have been countless unknown ones before that year. Now the broad flat valley was to have another flood, almost as great as that of 1826 and more destructive because the Colony was more populous and more developed.

These floods, the scanty and imperfect records suggest, occur at the time when his work is appreciated, his people, burdened, as they are, with the erection of a Kirk and a manse and with the maintenance of a minister and unaided by any portion of the municipal grant, have just now contributed money enough to supply their school with a complete outfit of maps and prints and books . . .”.

¹ See p. 83.

² A.6/29, fos. 174d.-175, Barclay to the Bishop of Rupert's Land, April 15, 1852.

peaks of the irregular cycles of more than average precipitation. The volume of a Red River flood depends upon the coincidence of a number of factors, the rainfall of the preceding autumn, an early and severe freezing of the ground, a heavy and late snowfall, a delayed and sudden break-up ; the coming together of the flood crests of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. The peculiar characteristics of a Red River flood are first, that since the river's headwaters are five hundred miles south of its mouth, the spring floods come crowding down a still frozen river, and second, that as the "valley" is not a true valley but an ancient lake bottom, the river channel is a great winding ditch into which the lateral tributaries pour at right angles. In a late and sudden break-up, the cresting Red has to fight its way north through a succession of tributary crests which delay the main stream and pile up its ice-laden waters. The third characteristic is that once the waters are over the banks they are free to spread for miles and so rise slowly. And the greatest floods are caused by the simultaneous arrival at the Forks of the crests of the Red and the Assiniboine. Thus the floods were rarely destructive of life, though very destructive of buildings. In the great floods, such as 1826 and 1852, the flood lay across the valley for a width of six to seven miles and from the Middle Settlement to above Pembina in a long narrow lake which was a partial inundation of the old lake bottom.

All the conditions precedent to a major flood seldom occur at the same time, but they had done so in 1826 ; and now they were to do so again in 1852. Since 1848 the summers and autumns had been seasons of more than usual rainfall. There was some flooding along the Red in 1850 and 1851, notably at Pembina in the latter year. Whether the ground froze early and deep in 1851 is not known. But there was a heavy snowfall in March 1852,¹ and the spring break-up was very late. Not until April 22-25 did the ice break and begin to move in the Red ;² it then broke up violently and moved down stream, to create a jam on the lower river which increased the height of the flood.³ The water in the rivers rose rapidly day by day after April 25, and by May 3 people were beginning to leave their homes in the Upper Settlement.⁴ The waters continued to rise, and began to spread slowly over the plain. On May 9 the rise was quickened, either by the arrival of the flood crest of the

¹ Anderson, *Notes of the Flood*, p. 9.

² See p. 128 ; Anderson, *Notes of the Flood*, p. 9 ; P.A.C., Diaries of Dr. William Cowan, I, April 24, 1852.

³ Ibid., and Ross, *Red River Settlement*, p. 414.

⁴ Anderson, *Notes of the Flood*, p. 10.

Assiniboine, or of water from the south moving across country.¹ Not until May 19 did the rise cease at the Upper Fort, until May 20 at the Lower Fort.² By May 21 the waters were definitely falling, and by June 4 the people were beginning to return to their homes.

When it became apparent that there would be a flood, preparations were made to retreat to higher ground, and efforts made to preserve what could not be moved. Wheat, provisions and furniture were moved to second storeys where there were such ; a good deal was stored in the gallery of the Upper Church. Rafts or platforms were built of firewood and logs, which were then secured to trees and loaded with ploughs, carts and other implements ; unthreshed grain was stacked on roofs of barns. Then the exodus from the Upper and Middle Settlements began. "Horses of the Company pass down", wrote Bishop Anderson, "sent for security to the Stone Fort. They were seen fording and swimming the creeks, now swollen to rivers. In every direction there are processions of cattle, horses, and carts, going to the Little Mountain : the creaking sound of the wheels is melancholy to hear. One stable drifts down the river".³ Those east of the Red made for the Little, or Bird's Hill. Those on the west bank went to the new parish of St. James, some four miles up the Assiniboine where the land was some feet higher and continued to rise to the Silver Heights, where refugees had encamped in 1826. This elevation ran in a long ridge to the northward to the Little Mountain or Grosse Isle. Beyond that was the Stony Mountain, a block of limestone outcrop which rose some sixty feet above the plain. Along these elevations the refugees pitched their tents and waited for the waters to subside.⁴ As they gazed eastward across the lake they could see their houses standing like stranded ships in the shallow waters, the soft green of the new maple leaves like a strange cloud on the skyline. And across fields and hay privilege, through the yards and around the houses plied the York boats and the birchbark and dugout canoes.

The Canadians and *métis* of the Upper Settlement took refuge on the high land west of St. James.⁵ Some presumably would join their relatives at the White Horse Plain, and some may have found a refuge on the ridges to the eastward, of which the Little Hill was only the most conspicuous. But there seems to be no doubt that it was their habitations which suffered most severely of all at the Upper Settlement. St. Boniface

¹ Ibid., pp. 23-6.

² See p. 130 ; P.A.C. Cowan Diaries, I, May 19, 1852.

³ Anderson, *Notes of the Flood*, p. 18.

⁴ See pp. 258-9 ; Anderson, *Notes of the Flood*, p. 39.

⁵ Ross, *Red River Settlement*, p. 415.

itself seems not to have been very much injured. The Lower Settlement, its general level being a good twenty-five feet higher above the bed of the river than that of the Upper Settlement, was not flooded at all. It was therefore a refuge and a source of constant help for the people of the flooded Upper and Middle Settlements. The Colvilles, secure in the sun-filled square of the Lower Fort, with its bright green lawns and the new flower beds,¹ did all they could to help and comfort their friends living by the cold and muddy waters that covered the Upper Settlement.

When the waters had at last drained away, the flooded area was a dreary spectacle ; fences and outbuildings, carts, wood piles and even houses and barns, had been floated away and piled as debris against the riverside trees and on the bends of the river. The Fort, the Upper Church, Kildonan and the Middle Church and all the houses were full of slime, washed in by the waters and from the clay chimneys of the houses. Doorways stood vacant, windows gaped broken, floors lay warped. And it was too late to sow with much hope of reaping before the fall frosts would come. But only the last comers to the Settlement, some forty of the pensioners, talked of leaving, as the Swiss and de Meuron colonists had in 1826.² All others had no thought except to repair the damage and put their fields and homes in order. They were Red River folk and would remain in Red River.

The recovery from the flood was swift ; seed wheat, supplied by the Company, had to be distributed in the spring of 1853 to those who had no crop in 1852,³ but with that the flood of 1852 ceased to have any effect on the course of Red River life. And with its recovery from the flood, Red River entered upon a succession of quiet and peaceful years. The Colvilles left in the fall of 1852, their work of pacification well and quietly done. Governor Caldwell followed in 1855, it at last having been found possible to remove the amiable giant from the office he had done so much to impair. He was succeeded by F. G. Johnson of Lower Canada, who was appointed Recorder in 1854, and who was bi-lingual. The remodelling of the Council began in 1853, when François Bruneau, a *métis* and a member of the Committee of Ten which had organized the Sayer rising, was appointed to the board ;⁴ Governor Johnson had four

¹ Anderson, *Notes of the Flood*, p. 64 ; M.H.S., Ramsey Papers, Colville to Ramsey, May 16, 1852.

² Anderson, *Notes of the Flood*, p. 80.

³ P.A.C., Cowan Diaries, I, May 29, 1853 ; Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 389-90.

⁴ Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 389.

more Canadians and *métis* added in 1856. The demands of the *métis* were being met bit by bit, as Simpson and the Governor and Committee felt their way cautiously towards a new understanding with the half-breed colony which they could not coerce and must therefore conciliate. So step by step the new Red River came into being.

The new Red River was a half caste society crowned by a little governing circle of the Company's officers, the clergy and the private traders, English and French. These last were no longer to be outside the pale of Company society. It was a free society which from now enjoyed a share in the local fur trade and an informally representative government. The concessions of 1849 to 1856, though yielded slowly and somewhat reluctantly, had been granted firmly and wisely, and created so just an equilibrium between the rights of the Company and the needs of the Colony, that when the Company once more came under attack, this time from the partisans of Canada, its adversaries and critics of 1849, the *métis* and the half-breeds, were its firmest friends. They had learned to live with the Company on the terms tacitly worked out between 1849 and 1856. They were reluctant to see come to an end the order of affairs then established in Red River, the fur trade with a free trade in furs, Red River farming balanced and checked by the buffalo hunt ; the half savage, half civilized, wholly free and wholly sloven life in which the *métis* was entirely at home ; and which was as swiftly transient as a prairie cloud.

COLVILLE'S LETTERS, 1849-52

*Duplicate*¹

Fort Victoria Vancouver's Island
15 Octr. 1849

Sir J. H. Pelly }
London }

MY DEAR SIR

I arrived here in good health on the 12th inst. & find the *Columbia*² is just on the point of sailing for England, which gives me an opportunity of sending you some account of my journey across the continent.

I left Norway House³ on 30 June, reached Cumberland House on 10 July, Isle a la Crosse 21 July, Fort Chipewyan 29 July, Vermilion 7 Aug. Dunvegan 17 Aug. McLeods Lake 7 Septr. Stewart's Lake 13 Septr. Fort George 16 Sept. Alexandria 18 Sept. Thompson's River 27 Septr. Fort Hope 8 Octr. Fort Langley 9 Octr. & this place, as aforesaid on the 12th Octr. At these different establishments I found every thing going on in the usual way, & I do not know of anything that requires any particular comment on my part. At Dunvegan they complain of a scarcity of provisions, owing to the large animals in the neighbourhood of the establishment having been too closely hunted. At the fort the people had lived for some time during last spring upon a species of fish called "suckers", which when dried as they were in the sun,

¹ A.12/13. Unless otherwise stated the original letters or the duplicates were written and signed by Eden Colville. The above letter (the duplicate sent to Sir George Simpson) is endorsed "1849 Fort Victoria 15 October Eden Colville to Sir John Henry Pelly Bt."

² For a note on the Hudson's Bay Company's barque *Columbia*, see *H.B.S.*, IV, 144.

³ Eden Colville was in London on April 4, 1849, and in Lachine on April 23. With Sir George Simpson and party he left Sault Ste. Marie on May 19 and spent the night of May 30-31 at Fort William. The party reached Norway House on June 20, and Eden Colville left that place with Chief Trader Paul Fraser on June 30. Fraser accompanied him to Fort Victoria. For details of Colville's progress as far as Dunvegan, see Appendix, pp. 173-9.

contain very little more nourishment than a pine shingle, & during last winter 40 Indians, men, women, & children perished by starvation. I think, therefore, that it will be necessary for the Council to take measures for removing this post to some other point in Peace River for some years, so as to allow the country to recruit.

In the upper parts of Fraser's River the salmon this year has been better both in quality and quantity than for many years past, but the natives have suffered considerably from the ravages of the small pox. The Indians, since the punishment inflicted on them for the murder of Belanger¹ last year have evinced no disposition to commit further acts of violence. As far as I could ascertain the two Indians killed by the party under the orders of Mr. McLean² were present, & aiding & abetting at the time of the murder, but I think that in all cases of this kind the actual perpetrator of the deed should be the only party punished, & he should, if possible, be conveyed to the nearest establishment & a proper investigation of the circumstances gone into, before any punishment is inflicted. At the same time it must be evident, that unless cold blooded & unprovoked murders, as this decidedly was, be promptly & effectually punished, it will be impossible to retain a footing in this part of the country.

I met the New Caledonia Brigade under the charge of C.T. Manson³ within two days march of Alexandria. Owing to the unusual severity of the weather last winter, a very large

¹ Alexis Belanger (or Bellanger) was with the New Caledonia brigade in November 1848 when he was shot by Indians at Quesnel River. He died at Alexandria eight days later. The punitive party sent by Chief Trader Donald Manson in January 1849 killed two accomplices, the actual murderer having fled to the Mountains. Sir George Simpson had already expressed his disapproval that the accomplices had been killed and that the "murderer was not apprehended" (D.4/70, Simpson to Manson, June 30, 1849). See also Morice, *Northern Interior of British Columbia*, p. 260 et seq.

² Donald McLean, clerk in charge of Fort Alexandria. He entered the Company's service in 1833 and was promoted to a Chief Tradership in 1853. He retired in 1861 and died in 1864. According to his original contract he came from Mull in the County of Argyll, Scotland, and was not, as suggested by Father Morice (*Northern Interior of British Columbia*, p. 268), an American.

³ Chief Trader Donald Manson. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, XVIII, 222-41.

proportion of the pack horses perished, & Mr. Manson has experienced considerable difficulty in getting in his outfit. I think it will be necessary to curtail the servants orders in this district in some measure, as the means of transport are limited, & some part of the road very hard upon the horses.

It is satisfactory, however, to be enabled to state the new road from Thompson's River to Fort Hope¹ has been passed without any material loss of horses, & is susceptible of improvement, so that a communication from the sea to the interior through British territory may be considered as attained. As a particular description of this road may be of interest to you, I will, at the risk of being considered tedious, make a few observations thereon. I left Thompson's River at 10 a.m. on the 1st October with five loaded horses, the men being on foot, as it was impossible to collect a sufficient number of horses to mount them. For three days we passed through a fine open prairie country, where we met with no hills of any consequence, & which affords an abundant supply of good grass for the horses. At 9 A.M. on 4 Oct. we breakfasted at the Horseguard where the plain country ends & the thickwoods commence. I then crossed a hill of considerable height, descending on a branch of the River Similkameen, & followed the valley of this small stream for some miles. It runs between high hills along the side of which the road is carried, & I think this part of the road is susceptible of some improvement, by passing along the bank of the river, crossing & recrossing the stream when requisite instead of continually ascending & descending the hills. At 9 oclock the following morning we breakfasted on the main stream of the Simil kameen River. After remaining a couple of hours to refresh the horses, we commenced the ascent of the first range of Mountains & encamped on the top of the hill about 5 p.m. As we were going up hill nearly the whole time this mountain must be very high. The following morning we again descended to a branch of the Simil kameen, & followed the valley for some miles; we, on leaving this, again climbed a hill of considerable

¹ See p. 168, *H.B.S.*, VI, 385, and Howay, "The Raison d'Etre of Forts Yale and Hope".

elevation to the Campement de Chevreuil. From this place to Fort Hope, a distance of nearly thirty miles there is no grass to be found for the horses & I started at 6 a.m. hoping to reach the Fort. Soon after leaving the Campement de Chevreuil the road descends to the Sa, anqua River, & at the bottom of this hill the chief difficulty of this route first presents itself, viz. the "boue biers" or to use the American phrase "Mud holes", which are very numerous, of great depth, & exceedingly fatiguing to loaded horses. These swamps are found at intervals, between the hill just mentioned & the top of another & the last considerable elevation which we reached about 2 p.m. From this the road descends to Peer's River, which is crossed five times, & at which the tired state of our horses compelled us to encamp at 6 p.m. The next morning we crossed & recrossed the Quaquialla River & arrived at the Fort at 10 a.m. We thus made out the journey in seven days with horses that were quite unfit for the work, but which necessity compelled us to make use of. Of this three days journey was through a fine prairie country, & of the remainder of the road, only two days journey was through any thing very distressing to horses. The improvements that are required, are 1st The sowing of a sufficient quantity of timothy & white clover at stated encampments for the brigades. The same operation is required at Fort Hope, as at present the horses have to be sent back to the horseguard after their arrival with the returns, & return again to meet the brigade from Langley with the outfit. 2ndly It will be necessary to send a party of men from each end of the road to cut all the fallen timber, as it is very fatiguing to the loaded horses to be continually stepping over these fallen trees, & 3rdly ditches should be cut through the swamps, & where requisite, logs & brush laid over them, so as to afford firm footing for the horses. These operations have been already commenced, & I trust will be completed in the course of next season. Mr. Douglas¹ informs me that he sends by this opportunity a sketch²

¹ Chief Factor James Douglas. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, VII, 309-14. See also Lamb, "Some Notes on the Douglas Family".

² This sketch has not been traced in the Company's archives.

of the country, which will render what I have written more intelligible.

My arrival here is so recent that I am not able to give you the result of any observations made by myself as to the capabilities of the island for settlement and agricultural purposes. I have taken a short ride in the immediate vicinity of the Fort. What soil there is, is of good quality, but the plain is traversed in all directions by beds of trap & granite, that interfere materially with the proper laying out of farms for settlement, & I understand this is the general character of the island, as far as yet explored. Captn. Grant¹ has settled at Sooke Harbour, about 25 miles distant from this establishment. I understand from Mr. Douglas that about 30 Miles to the Northward there is a very fine valley along the Cawitchen River, at least so the Indians report; I was very anxious to pay this place a visit, but Mr. Douglas is of opinion that it would not be prudent to attempt it without a larger party than can be collected here at present; as the country is thickly inhabited by a very uncivilised & treacherous tribe of Indians; & that laying aside the idea of personal risk, any successful attempt at outrage on their part would be attended with bad consequences, as regards the business and the settlement of the island.

The steamer² is at present not in working condition, as the old boilers were worn out & have been removed. The new boilers were safely got in today, & as soon as she is ready for sea I shall take a trip in her to the Coal Mine,³ which appeared to be going on very successfully at the date of last advices from that place. The rest of my time on this side of the Mountains I shall pass between this place, Nisqually & Vancouver, as I find that there will not be time to take a round with the steamer on her trading excursion, & also give a sufficient time to acquire all the information I

¹ See Ireland, "Captain Walter Colquhoun Grant: Vancouver Island's First Independent Settler".

² The *Beaver*. See *H.B.S.*, IV, passim; Lamb, "The Advent of the *Beaver*"; and McCain, *History of the S.S. Beaver*.

³ At Fort Rupert, Beaver Harbour, Vancouver Island. See p. 16.

should wish, with respect to conducting the business of the Columbia.

I have now, I believe, touched upon all the points that occur to me as worthy of notice, and hope by the next opportunity to be enabled to give you a more particular account of the capabilities of this island

I remain

My dear Sir

Very truly Yours

E. COLVILE

(Copy)¹

Fort Victoria Vancouver's Island

26 Octr. 1849

Sir J. H. Pelly
London

MY DEAR SIR

I addressed you at some length on the 15th inst. via San Francisco and Panama, of which communication I now forward a duplicate. Since that date we have been anxiously awaiting the arrival of the *Cadboro'*² from Nisqually with gold dust and returns from Vancouver. Owing to continued fogs and calms she did not arrive at this place till yesterday; having taken thirteen days to perform the distance. As the steamer will not be in working order for some weeks, I propose, as soon as the *Columbia* is despatched, say the beginning of next week, to accompany Mr. Douglas to Vancouver. On my return to this place I hope to find the steamer ready to take me to the coal mine, from which establishment we have no accounts since I last addressed you.

The "gold fever" continues with unabated vigour. Mr. Grant³ reports upwards of 5000 waggons, say 20,000 souls,

¹ D.5/26, enclosure to letter to Sir George Simpson dated October 26, 1849.

² For a note on the Hudson's Bay Company's schooner *Cadboro*, see *H.B.S.*, IV, 42.

³ For a biography of Richard Grant see *H.B.S.*, III, 442, and for a note on Fort Hall see *H.B.S.*, IV, 125.

having passed Fort Hall on their way to California from the United States. A rifle regiment was en route to Oregon, but 300 of their number had deserted to California. I would humbly beg to suggest to you that the Committee should take measures to evince their approbation of the conduct of Captn. Cooper,¹ Mr. Mitchell,² and other gentlemen connected with the naval department of the Company, in withstanding the numerous and tempting offers that have been made to them by various parties, to throw up their respective charges, & to take the command of American vessels. Shipowners in this quarter are naturally anxious to secure the services of persons who are acquainted with the dangerous navigation of the Columbia River. This desire, coupled with the enormous rise of wages in this part of the world, (ordinary seamen getting from 120 @ 140 dollars per month,) will account for the almost incredible offers made to the gentlemen referred to. To give you some idea of the state of things in this quarter I may mention that a report was brought here by the *Cadboro'* to the effect, that Mr. Mowatt,³ formerly in the Company's service, had engaged to take the command of an American vessel, & was to be paid at the rate of \$500 per month. Whether this be true or not, I cannot say, but it is quite within the bounds of probability, & reports of this kind naturally create some excitement in the minds of persons, who consider themselves equally well qualified. Under these circumstances I would submit it to your superior judgment whether it would not be both just and prudent for the Committee to testify their approbation of the conduct of these gentlemen. Although California gold is the cause of much anxiety to the Board of Management from the difficulty of preventing desertions

¹ James Cooper, then captain of the Company's barque *Columbia*. See Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, pp. 110-11, and *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company* . . . 1857, pp. 190-210.

² William Mitchell, chief mate of the *Columbia*. See Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, p. 340.

³ William Alexander Mouat, formerly chief mate of the *Mary Dare*. He left in October 1849 to go to California, but rejoined the Company in 1850. He was appointed a Chief Trader in 1860. See Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, p. 344.

among the men, yet it is the cause of a considerable increase in the profits of this district, as will appear by the cargo of the *Columbia*, which including the gold dust & specie Mr. Douglas estimates to be worth upwards of £70,000. Country Produce of all kinds is selling well. Boards @ \$60 per M feet. Shingles \$13 per M. Flour in the *Columbia* @ \$13 per barrel, and from the very large immigration to the Gold country, I think these prices are likely to continue. I have been told that one half of the population of San Francisco are living under canvass, so that the demand for lumber of all kinds will be large.

I remain, my dear Sir,
Very truly yours
E. COLVILE

Fort Vancouver 22nd Novr. 1849¹

Sir J. H. Pelly

MY DEAR SIR

I addressed you per Barque *Columbia* from Victoria on 26 ulto., and previously viâ Panama on 15 ulto. I, in company with Mr. Douglas, arrived at this place yesterday, and find an excellent opportunity of sending this by an officer of the American army who proceeds by the Panama steamer of the 1st Jany. directly to Washington.

As I was anxious to get here as soon as possible I passed very little time at Nisqually or the Cowilitz Farm, but I intend to devote some days to the inspection of the Puget's Sound Company's property on my return to Victoria. In this quarter matters seem to be proceeding in a very satisfactory manner. There is an American regiment stationed in the immediate vicinity of the fort; and Mr. Ogden² has many profitable

¹ A.12/13. This letter (a copy sent to Sir George Simpson) is endorsed: "1849 Ft. Vancouver 22 Novr. Eden Colvile to Sir John Henry Pelly Bt."

² Chief Factor Peter Skene Ogden. For an outline of his career see Dr. Burt Brown Barker's introduction to *H.B.S.*, XIII.

transactions with the Quartermaster & Commissariat departments thereof. General Smith,¹ the Governor of California has been here for some time back, & has, I understand, written a report to his friend the President² on the subject of the Hudson's Bay Company's lands in Oregon, in which he strenuously advises that the United States Government should forthwith close the bargain and purchase all the lands belonging to the two Companies³ South of the 49th parallel. Should his recommendation not be promptly acted upon I would suggest that measures be taken to enable the Company to give secure titles for land. I imagine this must be done by the U.S. Government, for at present I do not know how the Company could dispose of their lands to individual purchasers. This being accomplished I would recommend that all the lands be disposed of in convenient lots as rapidly as possibly, reserving only the ground actually covered by such establishments as it may be deemed advisable to keep up. Unless this be done very shortly the lands will be covered by American squatters, whom it will be utterly useless to attempt to dispossess. I am inclined to think that it would in this case be advisable to withdraw from the Snake Country and Walla Walla, which two establishments might perhaps be disposed of to the U.S. Government or other parties, and to confine the business here entirely to the sales to settlers and other inhabitants of Oregon. The number of officers clerks & men might thus be materially reduced, & I

¹ Major-General Persifor Frazer Smith (1798-1858) of the United States army. He was commissioner of armistice with Mexico in 1847 and afterwards became military and civil governor of Vera Cruz. Subsequently he had charge of the departments of California and Texas. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, and Appleton's *Cyclopaedia of American Biography*.

² Zachary Taylor (1784-1850) who had taken office in 1849.

³ The Hudson's Bay Company and the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company. The 1846 treaty which settled the Oregon boundary question guaranteed the possessory rights of both Companies, but the vague phrasing of the relevant articles caused controversy between the United States Government and the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1869 an award of \$650,000 was made for the possessory rights of both Companies by the British and American Joint Commission set up under the Treaty of July 1, 1863, for the "Final Settlement of the Claims of the Hudson's Bay and Puget's Sound Agricultural Companies".

believe the provisions required might be purchased at a much cheaper rate than at the present exorbitant rate of wages they can be raised. The surplus stock of sheep belonging to the Puget's Sound Coy. for which no sufficient range can be found on Vancouver's Island might be advantageously disposed of to the purchasers of the different lots.

The prices of goods of all sorts continue very high, but I suppose a reaction will ere long take place, as American Merchants will probably be induced to send large consignments to parties in Oregon. General Smith, who is a lawyer as well as a soldier, has, Mr. Ogden informs me, given it as his decided opinion that under the treaty¹ the American Government can make no claim for duty on goods imported by the H.B.Coy. Should this point be so determined which I confess appears to me exceedingly doubtful, it will give to the Company an advantage of about 35 per cent on goods of British manufacture over all other importers in Oregon.

The express from the East side of the Mountains arrived at this place two days before I did, and I regret to say brought the tidings of the death of Mr. Charles,² a very promising young man, who was in charge of the party. It appears that they were encamped on the Athabasca River, & were amusing themselves by firing at a mark, and by the accidental discharge of Mr. Young's³ rifle he was shot through the body and expired

¹ The treaty concluded between Great Britain and the United States of America on June 15, 1846, settling the boundary west of the Rocky Mountains to the coast at the Forty-ninth Parallel of North Latitude.

² John Charles, apprentice clerk, who was attached to the Fort Vancouver Depot (B.239/1/20, fo. 42). The accident took place at Moose Encampment, Rocky Mountain Portage, on October 21, 1849. D.5/26, P.S. Ogden to Sir George Simpson, dated Vancouver, November 26, 1849: "... he [Charles] survived but a short time after receiving the fatal shot... The following day Mr. Frederick Lewis Son of Chief Factor Lewis took charge of the Party consisting of Sir Edward Poore Mr. Franklin Mr. A. Young and John Fraser and eight Men...".

³ Alexander Young who had been employed as a shipbuilder in Canada for many years. He was en route to California. Sir George Simpson had agreed to provide him with a free passage to Fort Vancouver on condition that he should render his services to the Company as ship's carpenter for a term of six months from the date of arrival (D.4/70, fo. 222d.). He was not to receive any remuneration, but he was to be provided with board and lodging.

in two hours. This is the more to be regretted as he was one of the very few young gentlemen here who purposed remaining in the service, nearly the whole of them at this place having given notice of retirement.

I have had several conversations with Mr. Douglas with respect to the settlement of Vancouver's Island, a matter in which he takes great interest, and I agree with him in thinking that it would be advisable that he should be authorised to open a Land office in the Island and dispose of lots to British subjects making applications for the same, including such portions of the reserves of the H B & Puget Sound Companies, as he may consider unnecessary for the carrying on the business of the respective concerns. He might also proceed forthwith to lay out town lots in eligible situations on the said reserves or elsewhere, in the disposal of which I think he should not be bound down by any rigid instructions as to price &c, inasmuch as it is frequently desirable to encourage in the first instance, by placing a moderate or even a nominal price on these lots, the establishment of mechanics and others, whose presence will give an enhanced value to the lots in the vicinity. I am inclined to think that it will be necessary to send out a surveyor, as it appears to me that Capt'n. Grant, allowing him to be a good practical surveyor, of which I am somewhat dubious, will have quite enough to do in attending to his own property in the Island. Should your opinion coincide with mine in this matter, I would suggest that a stout active young man be engaged in the capacity of surveyor & Clerk so that his services during the rainy season, when surveying operations cannot be well carried on, may be available at Fort Victoria.

I propose to remain here about three weeks, & expect to find the steamer at Nisqually, ready to take me to the Coal Mine.

I remain

My dear Sir

Very truly Yours

E. COLVILE

Fort Vancouver 8 Dec. 1849¹

Sir J. H. Pelly

MY DEAR SIR

I addressed you last on 22 ulto. since which date we have received viâ Panama duplicates of letters sent per *Cowlitz*.² I propose to leave this the day after tomorrow, and, as we are not likely to have any opportunity from Victoria I will leave this letter to be forwarded to San Francisco by the first vessel.

I have written to my Father on all points that appear to be of interest, which letter he will probably communicate to you. Since doing so, however, we this morning received accounts from Victoria, by which we learn that an American vessel bound from San Francisco to the Columbia had put into Victoria with disabled rudder and loss of mizen mast and jib boom. I annex an extract from Mr. Work's³ letter dated 26 Nov. which will give you an idea of the state of things at San Francisco⁴ at the date of last advices.

"By what little we have been able to learn from Capt. Marwin
 "and his passengers provisions and goods are getting to a
 "very high price in California; flour had risen in a week's
 "time from 15 to 30 dollars a barrel before he left a fortnight
 "ago. Lumber was then selling from 300 to 400 dollars per
 "1000 feet. It was known that a great many vessels were to
 "come from the States with lumber. 300 to 400 vessels
 "were in port at San Francisco. Seamen's wages had fallen

¹ A.12/13. There is also a copy which was sent to Sir George Simpson endorsed: "1849 Fort Vancouver 8 December Eden Colville to Sir John Henry Pelly Bart."

² For a note on the Hudson's Bay Company's barque *Cowlitz*, see *H.B.S.*, VI, 35.

³ Chief Factor John Work, a member of the Board of Management at Fort Vancouver. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, IV, 356-8.

⁴ B.223/b/38, fo. 51, P. S. Ogden and J. Douglas to A. Barclay, dated Fort Vancouver, September 6, 1848: "The discovery of the gold region on the Sacramento has created an immense sensation in this country; hundreds of people of every age and sex are preparing to abandon their homes and property for the purpose of digging gold in California. The tales told of the wondrous stores of wealth discovered in this new El Dorado have captivated all minds and disgusted them with the moderate rewards of common place industry".

“from 150 to 100 dollars a month, and those going to the States were shipping for 100 dollars per month to Valparaiso or some other point that would take 5 or 6 weeks to reach, and the rest of the voyage they were to have 15 dollars per month. There were plenty of seamen at California, but a great number had died during the summer.”

The general impression seems to be that there will be a famine in California, and that flour will reach 100 dollars per barrel. You will see by the above written that seamen's wages have already commenced to fall, and in all probability they will reach a moderate figure in the course of the winter, in which case I have no doubt that the proposed employment of the *Norman Morrison*¹ in conveying a cargo of lumber to San Francisco will be a profitable speculation, and even at the present rate of wages I have after much consideration come to the conclusion that it will be the only way of keeping a sufficient number of hands to navigate, and also of turning her to any account. Mr. Douglas has gone into calculations by which it appears that, allowing 150 dollars per month to the seamen, 250 dollars to the officers and 500 dollars to the Captain, and that the price of lumber should remain at 300 dollars per 1000 feet, which I think it surely will, she should realise a profit of \$30,000 on the cargo. I have suggested to him that, should the state of affairs at Victoria permit it, it would be as well for him to take a passage in her as supercargo, on the contrary, that some intelligent officer should be selected for that purpose.

Mr. Douglas has shewn me a letter that he has written to Mr. Barclay² offering to purchase land in Vancouver's Island;

¹ The *Norman Morrison* (529 $\frac{5}{10}$ tons), “a very fine ship built of teak and 12 years A1 at Lloyds from 1846”, was bought by the Hudson's Bay Company in November 1848 for £7,000. She was sent to the Pacific Northwest Coast to replace the barque *Vancouver* which had been lost whilst entering the Columbia River in May 1848. The *Norman Morrison* (Captain David D. Wishart) sailed from London for Vancouver Island in October 1849, and made two further voyages there in 1851 and 1852. After her return to London in the summer of 1853 she was sold for £6,500 and was replaced by a new vessel, the *Princess Victoria*.

² Archibald Barclay. See Introduction, p. lxxv.

which application I trust will be successful, as I think he will make a valuable settler. I do not know whether the purchase money derived from sales of lots included in the Hudson's Bay and Puget Sound Company's reserves will be applied to the benefit of those concerns respectively, or whether the land will be sold subject to the conditions of the other land in the island, but in either case I think it will be better both for the Colony and the Company that lots for agricultural and town purposes should be disposed of, reserving a sufficient quantity in the vicinity of Victoria as may be necessary for the support of the establishment. With respect to the Puget's Sound Company's reserve I think it would be better to confine the sales to lots for a town to be laid out on Esquimault Harbour, which cannot fail to be a place of importance should the Colony prosper.

I hope in my next communication to give you a satisfactory account of the prospects of the coal mine, which place I purpose to visit forthwith.

I remain

My dear Sir

Very truly Yours

E. COLVILE

Fort Victoria 14 *Jany.* 1850¹

Sir J. H. Pelly

MY DEAR SIR

I had last the pleasure of addressing you from Fort Vancouver on 8th ultimo, since which date we have no further news from England. We left that place on 10 Decr. viâ the Cowlitz Portage, and reached this on 21st.

We have been waiting here since for the steamer, the repairs of which I am happy to say are now completed. We took the trial trip on 11th & found that the engines worked well, &

¹ A.12/13. This letter (the copy sent to Sir George Simpson) is endorsed: "1850 Fort Victoria 14 January Eden Colville to Sir John Henry Pelly Bart."

that the steam was got up with a less expenditure of fuel than was the case with the old boilers. She is now taking in her wood, & I hope tomorrow that we shall take our departure for the coal mine. On the occasion of the trial trip we found the American Brig *Cayuga* from San Francisco bound to this place & towed her in here. Mr. Douglas has closed a bargain with the super cargo thereof to take all our lumber here, say 100,000 feet at eighty dollars per thousand, & shingles @ \$10 per M. to be paid for in gold dust at the rate of \$16 per oz. This very profitable transaction is one of the advantages we derive from the discovery of the gold in California. The mate and four of the people belonging to this vessel put off in the boat at Nitinat or Barclay Sound on the West side of this island for the purpose of sounding the brig being becalmed at the time. While they were absent the brig was carried off by a strong tide, & a breeze springing up, was obliged to make sail being unable to pick up the boat. Some days afterwards some Indians reported the occurrence to Captn. Grant, who immediately started with some of his men & Indians & met them about half way between his place & Port San Juan. They had then been out fifteen days having subsisted entirely upon muscles & one raven that they shot. They were very much exhausted & nearly starved to death, but have since quite recovered. They report that the whole coast they passed is rocky & the interior mountainous & covered with timber, & I fear this will be found to be the general character of the island. I am afraid that with the exception of the plains mentioned in Captn. Grant's report, & the Cowitchen valley, there will be found very little land available for settlement.

On 10th inst. Captain Brothie¹ arrived at this place in a small boat having pulled across the straits from Port Discovery, where his ship is at present lying, & where he proposes to commence his lumbering operations. The crew of his vessel

¹ William Brothie, formerly in the Company's employ, but now supercargo of the *Albion*. He made the first definite attempt to begin a lumber export trade from Vancouver Island. See Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, pp. 64-5, and Lamb, "Early Lumbering on Vancouver Island".

all left at Sidney,¹ where the gold fever appears to be raging violently, & he has come on with such men as he could pick up there. I think with the means at his disposal he will have great difficulty in loading his ship at all, & even should he succeed, it will be, I fear, an unprofitable speculation. Seamen's wages at San Francisco have fallen to \$80 per month.

I propose calling at Langley on my return from the coal mine, & shall then proceed to Vancouver to start with the express across the mountains. Before so doing I shall do myself the pleasure of addressing you and in the meantime remain

My dear Sir
Very truly Yours
E. COLVILE

Fort Victoria 6 February 1850²

Sir J. H. Pelly

MY DEAR SIR

I addressed you from this place on the 14th ulto. per Brig *Cayuga*, since which I have paid a visit to the coalmine, & found on my return that she had not taken her departure, having been obliged to run to Nisqually for the purpose of landing her passengers. She has nearly completed her loading & will start for San Francisco tomorrow, so that I hope she may yet catch the 1st March mail.

We left this place in the steamer *Beaver* on 16 ulto. and after sundry detentions from snowstorms reached Fort Rupert on the 22nd without accident, & found the new boilers to work well. We found every thing at this establishment to be progressing satisfactorily. The stockades and bastions completed, several substantial buildings erected, and others

¹ The *Albion* (see p. 15, n. 1) had come to the North Pacific Coast from London by way of Australia.

² A.12/13. This letter (the copy sent to Sir George Simpson) is endorsed: "1850 Fort Victoria 6 February Eden Colville to Sir John Henry Pelly Bart."

in progress, and a portion of land cleared for planting potatoes. The Indians, about one thousand in number, who live around the fort have been all along well disposed, and industrious, and I consider that the state of affairs here reflect great credit on Capt. McNeil's¹ management. About 1100 tons of surface coal have been collected by the Indians, & are lying outside the Fort, properly protected from the weather, ready for shipment. The gang of miners appear to be well satisfied with all that has been done for them but will be more contented when we shall be in a condition to supply them with fresh provisions occasionally. They have sunk a shaft about half a mile from the fort, and although I am sorry that I have it not in my power to report the discovery of a workable seam of coal, yet Mr. Mure² is in high spirits as to his prospects of success. For your information I beg to forward an account of the different strata gone through as furnished me by Mr. Mure.

	feet.	inches.
Gravel	6.	—
Sand & quick mud	9.	—
Freestone	12.	—
"Fakes" with 5 seams of coal varying from 1 @ 4½ inches	6.	—
Fake with fireclay	1.	—
Blue till	3.	6
Grey freestone (not through yet)	4.	
	41.	6. up to 26 Jany.

The metals improve as they go down, & Mr. Mure considers that the grey freestone will be found to be the roofing of a

¹ William Henry McNeill. See *H.B.S.*, VII, 314-18.

² According to A.6/27, fos. 172d.-177, John Muir, the "Oversman" left England in 1848 in the chartered ship *Harpooner* accompanied by his wife and family. His five sons were listed as miners. See Nesbitt, "The Diary of Martha Cheney Ella", p. 101, for more definite particulars concerning the Muir family.

workable seam. The men according to their agreements work only eight hours per day, & are able with a winch and bucket to get rid of all the water that accumulates during the other 16 hours in about three quarters of an hour to an hour. Owing to the depth of snow I was unable to make any excursions into the interior of the island in the neighbourhood of Fort Rupert although I attempted to do so on snowshoes. I was anxious to cross the island to an inlet on the West side thereof, which runs up within a few miles of the Fort, & which I think may hereafter be the place for shipping coal, as it will save a tedious navigation round Cape Scott. I have requested Capt. McNeil to make a survey of this inlet and the intervening country as soon as the season will admit, & to report thereon. I very much regret that I have not a very favorable account to give of such part of Vancouver's Island as we could see from the steamer. As far as Johnstone Straits there is apparently a portion of tolerably level land along the seaboard, covered with timber, among which some prairie land may be hereafter discovered, but from opposite Point Mudge to within a few miles of Fort Rupert, there is a succession of Mountains from 2000 to 3000 feet in height down to the water's edge. In the immediate vicinity of the fort the land is heavily timbered with pine and cedar, & the soil is said to be a sort of peat. We left Fort Rupert on 28 ulto. with the intention of visiting Fort Langley on our return, but about twelve miles below that establishment we found Fraser's River was barred by ice, so we retraced our steps and arrived at this place on the 3rd instant where we found all well. The *Cadboro'* returned from Nisqually with the Brig *Cayuga*, and brought between them 750 sheep which were all landed safely.

While I was writing the above the Barque *Victory* chartered by Messrs. Pelly¹ & McTavish² for this place and Fort Vancouver arrived in port with a cargo of Sandwich Island produce. She reports the arrival of the Barque *Columbia* at

¹ George Pelly, first cousin of Sir John Henry Pelly, and agent for the Hudson's Bay Company in Honolulu.

² Chief Trader Dugald Mactavish, who was stationed at Honolulu in charge of the Company's Sandwich Islands business.

the Port of Honolulu on the 1st Decr., the Brigantine *Mary Dare*¹ on the 19th Decr. & the Barque *Cowlitz* on her way hither on the 13th Jany. The coals sent by the *Mary Dare* had been sold to the American Screw propeller *Massachusetts* at \$16½ per ton. She had about 150 tons on board, and the price appears satisfactory.

As the *Cayuga* will take all the sawn stuff on hand at this place, we shall have no cargo to freight the *Norman Morrison* to San Francisco as we proposed, but Mr. Douglas will employ her as profitably as circumstances will admit, though I have great apprehensions that her crew can only be retained by paying an exorbitant rate of wages.

I propose to leave this place on the 11th inst. for Nisqually and pay a visit to Fort George and Cape Disappointment before going to Fort Vancouver, from which place I shall do myself the pleasure of addressing you.

I remain

My dear Sir,

Very truly yours

E. COLVILLE

Fort Vancouver 5th March 1850²

Sir J. H. Pelly

MY DEAR SIR

I had last this pleasure on 6 Feby. from Fort Victoria. I left that place on 13 Feby. and arrived here on 25 Feby.

¹ The brig *Mary Dare* of 149 tons was built at Bridport, Dorset, in 1842 and was bought by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1846. She arrived at Fort Victoria in May 1847, and for the next seven years was employed on the Pacific Northwest Coast and in carrying produce to and from the Sandwich Islands. About the end of 1848 or early in 1849 the *Mary Dare* was converted into a brigantine. In December 1853 she sailed for England and in July of the following year she was sold by the Company.

² A.12/13. This original letter is addressed on the back page: "Sir J. H. Pelly Bart. Hudson's Bay House Fenchurch Street London" and is marked "*Private*". The back page also bears a red circular post mark: "AB 1 JU 1850"; a black circular post mark: "NEW YORK [illegible] 28"; and an oblong red post mark: "MAITLAND, PHELPS & CO NEW-YORK".

having visited Fort George and Cape Disappointment on my way. At this establishment every thing has been going on as well as can be expected. Trade is very brisk, and the large expenditure by the United States Quartermaster together with the influx of gold and silver from California has put plenty of dollars in circulation of which I am happy to say we get a fair proportion. The cash sales at this establishment alone since we left it on 10 Decr. to this date amount to nearly \$15,000, and the supply of goods is reduced to the lowest ebb. There is not a single blanket remaining in the stores and we are anxiously awaiting the arrival of the Barque *Victory* from Victoria, as she will bring a small supply of blankets and other articles in request, that Mr. Douglas was able to spare from that Depôt. As we are the chief holders of flour in Oregon we can still obtain \$30 per barrel for that article although I believe that is higher than the present price in California.

From the difficulty of obtaining labourers I am afraid that the Puget's Sound Company will have great difficulty in carrying on their affairs. The inducements to desertion are so great, the ordinary rate of wages being \$5 per diem, and for mechanics from \$8 @ \$10, that it is almost impossible to keep our men. I would here remark, however, that owing to the high price of goods that at present prevails, our servants are in fact as well off as the others, yet the nominally high rate of wages is too great a temptation to be resisted. The land in the neighbourhood of Nisqually occupied by the Puget's Sound Company is of a very inferior quality. The soil is one bed of shingly gravel, & I am of opinion is very much overstocked. At the Cowlitz Farm the soil is of a better quality, but sadly in want of manure, and with the present difficulty in procuring labourers it is useless attempting to cultivate so large a farm properly. The system of farming universally pursued in Oregon appears to be as bad as possible. To give you some idea of it I may mention that according to the information I have received there is not a farm yard in Oregon, and the only way land is manured is by parking sheep and cattle on the land.

I hope to leave this with the Spring Express on the 18th

instant¹ and shall lose no time in making my way to Norway House.

I remain,

My dear Sir

Very truly yours

E. COLVILLE

Archibald Barclay Esq.
Secretary
Hon. Hudsons Bay Co.
London

Norway House 21 *June* 1850²

SIR

I have to request you will transfer from my account with the Hudsons Bay Company to that of Sir George Simpson, or honor that gentleman's draft on my account, as he may desire, to an amount not Exceeding Two hundred pounds Sterling.

I am

Sir

Your obt. Servant

E. COLVILLE

A. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House

Lower Fort Garry 14 *August* 1850³

MY DEAR SIR

I arrived at this establishment on the 11th instant, after a somewhat lengthy voyage from Fort William.⁴

¹ See p. 169. The "east side express", with "Gov. Colville, Sir Edward Poore, Mr. Franklin and Mr. Kenith Logan retired clerk..." left Fort Vancouver on March 20, 1850 (A.11/70, fo. 475). Eden Colville and Kenneth Logan arrived at Norway House, via the Saskatchewan River, on June 10, 1850 (B.154/a/52).

² A.12/13. This letter is in a clerk's handwriting, but bears Colville's signature. The back page is addressed: "Archd. Barclay Esq. HB House London".

³ A.13/4. This letter bears the following remarks: "Recd. Oct./50 Read [at the London Committee] Oct. 16/50". It also bears Barclay's pencilled instructions regarding the part to be copied and sent to The Right Honourable the Earl Grey. The extract, sent to the Colonial Office under cover of a letter from Sir John Henry Pelly dated November 22, 1850, is marked by a line in the margin. A copy of this extract is in A.8/6, fos. 71d.-72d.

⁴ Colville attended the Council of the Northern Department held at Norway

I have much pleasure in informing you that the crops throughout that part of the settlement between this and the Upper Fort present a very thriving appearance, and that the harvest has commenced with every prospect of settled weather, so that there is no reason to dread any deficiency in agricultural produce. One or two of the hunters have arrived at the settlement, & letters have been received, stating that the hunters have been generally successful. I understand that above the junction of the Assineboine and Red Rivers, the crops have suffered to some extent from the unusual height of the water, but on the whole as far as their material interests are concerned the settlers have nothing to complain of. | I regret much, however, to state that in other respects the inhabitants of the settlement of all classes appear to be in an unusually excited state. On my arrival here I found a petition, addressed to me, copy of which I enclose,¹ signed by the whole of the lay members of the Council of Assiniboia, and about five hundred others, of all classes and origins in the settlement, complaining of the inefficiency of Major Caldwell as Governor of the Colony, and requesting me to assume the Presidency of the Court and Council in my capacity of a Governor of Rupert's Land. From the enquiries I have made, during the very short period of my stay here, I believe that I may consider this petition, as the expression of the general sentiments of the community, with the sole exception of the clergy. I was informed yesterday by Messrs. Ross and McDermot, that the whole of the Councillors, with the exception of the two Bishops² and Mr. Cockran, have determined, in the event of

House beginning on June 15, 1850 (B.239/k/2, fo. 236), and on June 22 he left in a light canoe to meet his wife at Fort William, where he arrived on July 13. The schooner from Sault Ste. Marie arrived at Fort William on the same day. "In her came Passengers Mrs. Colvile Mr. & Mrs. Collingwood, a Captn. Rook & a Mr. Bright who came . . . for the purpose of meeting Govr. Colvile . . .". Mr. and Mrs. Colvile left for Red River on July 19, 1850 (B.231/a/20).

¹ See Introduction, pp. c, ciii.

² David Anderson, Bishop of Rupert's Land, 1849-64, and Joseph Norbert Provencher, Roman Catholic Bishop of the North West (later St. Boniface) from 1847-53.

my returning a negative answer to this petition, at once to resign their seats in Council, & that they actually informed Major Caldwell at their last meeting that they would never again meet under him as their President. Beyond a dislike to his demeanour, and a conviction of his want of business habits I have been unable to discover the cause of the decided objection evinced against him; but I feel bound to state, that with the exception of the Protestant Clergy, with whom he is on the best and most intimate terms, the feeling against him appears to be universal. I yesterday held a long conversation with Major Caldwell on this subject, who, at first, seemed to be of opinion that as he was nominated by the Crown, though holding no commission therefrom, he could not, without exposing himself to the risk of censure, permit me to assume that portion of his duties as Governor of Assiniboia, comprising the Presidency of the Court and Council. I pointed out to him the utter impossibility of his carrying on the Government of the Colony, should the Councillors execute their threat of throwing up their commissions, inasmuch as neither he, nor I had the power of nominating others in their room, even if there were materials from which to appoint them. Under these circumstances he agreed with me that the Colony would be in a state of anarchy, that no laws could be passed, no public works carried on, and, what is of still more importance, the administration of justice, both civil and criminal, would be at a stand still. I told him, that should he on mature consideration, deem it better that I should assume the above mentioned duties, I would do so, although it would be entirely contrary to my own inclinations, and to the intentions expressed by the Governor and Committee to myself when I was in England last year. I feel that in so doing I shall be taking on myself the serious responsibility of acting contrary to the implied instructions of the Committee, & nothing would induce me so to act, but the feeling that it is the only way, by which the tranquillity of the Colony can be preserved. I have been credibly informed that should I return a negative answer to the petition, an agitation will be at once organised for the purpose of obtaining representative institutions, a system of

government, for which the people are wholly unfit. My final decision on this matter I shall not be able to communicate by this opportunity, as it is necessary that my canoe should start forthwith, but by the last canoe of the season, to leave at the end of this month I shall again address you on this subject.

I have received no accounts from the other districts of later date than what will be communicated by Sir George Simpson.

I remain, My dear Sir,
Very truly Yours
E. COLVILE

Red River Settlement *July* 1850¹

(Copy)

Eden Colville Esqr.

Govr. of Ruperts Land

SIR

We the inhabitants of this Settlement having for many months endured the evils of misgovernment resort to you for releif and respectfully entreat you to rescue us from the painful sense of doubt and insecurity under which we presently labour and from the horrors of that anarchy which we may too certainly and too speedily anticipate.

For more than twelve months all useful public works have been almost entirely suspended. Our roads neglected and bridges unrepaired have rendered intercommunication only possible at the imminent risk of life, for many weeks there has been an entire suspension of administrative justice all the magistrates declining office from prudential

¹ This enclosure is in a clerk's writing. It bears the following remarks in red ink and pencil "Recd. with Mr. C's lett. of Aug. 14 Copy for Ld. Grey". It is endorsed: "Entd. Eden Colville Aug. 14/50. Sent to Earl Grey with the Govrs. [Sir John Henry Pelly] letter of November 22/50". A copy of this enclosure is in A.8/6, fo. 73-73d.

motives under the present Government. Acts of felonious violence on property have been committed with impunity—and submitted to in silence from the utter hopelessness of obtaining redress.

These and other evils we attribute to Major Caldwell's entire unacquaintance with business to his total unfamiliarity with the art of Government and to an unhappy infirmity of temper, or defect in demeanor which disqualifies him from acting in concert with those who for many years have assisted in maintaining order administring justice and otherwise promoting the public welfare.

We therefore most respectfully and earnestly implore you to assume on your arrival in this Settlement all the functions of its Government. We look to you as our only succour in our present extremity—and we rest in the happy assurance that under your more auspicious superintendence we shall again enjoy that peace and harmony to which we have too long been strangers.

Independantly of our implicit reliance upon your personal qualifications we are anxious again to see the affairs of the Settlement placed under the charge of those who by their permanent connexion with the Company are best able to judge of our wants & wishes.

We have the honor to be

Sir, Your Obdt. humble Servants

James Bird, John Bunn, Alexr. Ross, Andw. McDermot, Cuthbert Grant, John Pritchard,¹ John P. Pruden,² Councillors, and Willm. Todd³ Thos. Bunn⁴ and 502 others.

¹ For a biography see *H.B.S.*, II, 238–9.

² For a biography see *H.B.S.*, I, 461.

³ For remarks on his death see pp. 94, 96, 134, 253, 254, and for a biography, see *H.B.S.*, I, 471–2.

⁴ For a biography, see *H.B.S.*, I, 431–2.

Lower Fort Garry 26 *August* 1850¹

A. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House

MY DEAR SIR

I addressed you on the 14th instant, to which letter I beg to refer you. Since I wrote last the harvest has been progressing favourably, and from all I hear I believe that the returns will be beyond an average crop. The body of the hunters have not yet returned from the plains, but I understand that the produce of the chase will be also abundant.

I beg to enclose you a copy of my reply to the petition I received, a copy of which I forwarded by the last opportunity, and I trust that the course, which, under the circumstances, I have felt myself compelled to adopt, may meet with the approbation of the Governor and Committee. I found the breach between Major Caldwell and his Council quite irreconcilable, and I have every reason to believe that my compliance with the prayer of the petitioners will give general, I may almost say, universal satisfaction to the inhabitants of the Colony. Major Caldwell appears well pleased with the tenor of my letter to the petitioners, and agreed with me, that there was no other method of carrying on the government, or the administration of justice. He, at one time, wished that either he or I should appoint councillors in the room of those who refuse to sit with him, but on my informing him that it was my conviction that we had no power to do this, and that, even if we had, I did not know whom we could appoint, he admitted that the course I proposed was the best. I think that considerable difficulty would be found in selecting an entirely new Council, as there are few people, as far as I can

¹ A.13/4. There is also a copy in a clerk's writing in A.12/13. The original letter is addressed: "A. Barclay Esqr. Hudson's Bay House Fenchurch Street London", and is endorsed: "E. Colville Aug 26/50 with Govrs. letter of Nov. 22/50". Colville's letter also bears the remark in Barclay's writing: "Recd. Nov. 18/50", and instructions regarding an extract to be copied for the Colonial Office. The extract, sent to the Colonial Office under cover of a letter from Sir John Henry Pelly dated November 22, 1850, is marked above by a line in the margin. A copy of this extract is in A.8/6, fos. 73d.-74.

learn, that are properly qualified for the office. I hope, however, by the time the winter express starts, that I shall be better able to offer an opinion on this point, as I intend to use every means in my power to become personally acquainted with the inhabitants of the Colony.

William Driver, a carpenter in the Company's service at this place, a good steady man, has made application for a steerage passage from Orkney to York Factory, by the ship of next season for his brother-in-law, Alexander Rothnie, Farm servant, Drum of Ruin, Old Meldrum, Aberdeenshire, who, he is anxious should come out here as a settler. Driver, who has means in the Company's hands, holds himself responsible for the payment of the passage money, and begs that, as soon as convenient, notice may be given to Alexander Rothnie, from The Hudson's Bay House, whether a passage is to be granted to him. I shall feel obliged by your communicating to me the decision of the Committee on this point by the first opportunity.¹

When Sir George Simpson was here, he found that Captain Foss² had such serious differences with some of the Company's Officers, as to render his presence at the Mess table exceedingly unpleasant. He accordingly intimated to him that for the future he could not be considered a member of the mess, but that every convenience should be given to him in the way of kitchen &c. The question as to the payment of the supplies he would require, Sir George seems to have left for future consideration. Capt'n. Foss is at present at York Factory, but as he will soon return, I have arranged with Mr. Black,³ that he shall be allowed to draw supplies at the rate of £50 per annum, to be placed for the present to a Suspense Account, leaving it to the Committee to decide, whether the amount should be charged to Capt'n. Foss' account, or written off to General Charges. I think it right to mention that should the

¹ A.6/29, fo. 62d., A. Barclay to E. Colville dated London, April 11, 1851, "Alexander Ruthvie [sic] declines going to Red River on the ground that he has taken a new lease of his farm . . .".

² Christopher Vaughan Foss. See Introduction, p. xlix, n. 1.

³ Chief Trader John Black. See Introduction, p. cv.

latter be done Major Caldwell will in all probability make a similar demand, but, as the Company had decided that Captn. Foss should have a seat at the mess table, I do not like to decide the matter without receiving their instructions. I shall inform Captn. Foss that for all supplies he may claim beyond the above mentioned sum he must pay forthwith.

I remain

Very truly yours

E. COLVILE

Upper Fort Garry 19 *Aug.* 1850¹

A. Ross Esqr.

SIR

I have to acknowledge the receipt of a petition, signed by several members of the Council of Assiniboia, and about five hundred others, inhabitants of the Colony, and I beg to hand you for the information of yourself and the other petitioners the following reply.

The petition in question contains certain allegations against Major Caldwell, accusing him of putting a stop to all public works, and of suspending the administration of justice. I am bound to confess that Major Caldwell might with justice retort upon his Councillors, that they have not evinced that conciliatory spirit, with which alone the government can be satisfactorily carried on, and that, by their voluntary retirement from the functions of the magistracy, they have rendered it impossible for him to carry on the administration of justice.

The petition goes on to request me to assume the functions

¹ This copy enclosure is in Eden Colvile's writing. It bears the following remarks in Archibald Barclay's writing: "Recd. Nov. 18/50 Enclosed in Mr. Colvile's let. of Aug. 26", as well as his instructions for a copy to be made to be sent to the Colonial Office. The copy made for the Colonial Office was sent under cover of a letter from Sir John Henry Pelly dated November 22, 1850. Another copy was included in A.8/6, fos. 74d.-75.

of the government and thereby to restore peace and harmony to the settlement.

I have, in addition to the state of feeling that may be gathered from the petition, received reliable information that the whole of the Councillors (with the exception of the Clergy) have expressed their determination not again to meet Major Caldwell either in Court or Council. As the appointment of Councillors rests entirely with the Governor and Committee of the Honble. Hudson's Bay Company, and as, consequently, neither Major Caldwell nor myself have the power to nominate Councillors in the room of these recusant gentlemen, the effect of this determination will be that no new laws can be passed, and no existing laws administered. In a word the Colony will be in a state of anarchy.

Under these circumstances, as being the only course that appears to remain, by which the Colony can be preserved from this deplorable state of things, I am willing, in my capacity of Governor of Rupert's Land, to assume that portion of Major Caldwell's duties, comprising the Presidency of the Court and Council, until the decision of the Committee be known, whether they will appoint such a Governor in the room of Major Caldwell, as may be able to act with the present Council, or such Councillors as may be able to act with Major Caldwell.

As I assume these duties at a considerable sacrifice of my personal ease and comfort, and with the responsibility of acting against the wishes of the Governor and Committee, who desire, in accordance with the wishes of the people, as formerly expressed, that all the functions of the Government should be exercised by a gentleman totally unconnected with the Honble. Company, I think I have a right to expect the cordial cooperation of the Councillors, and a favourable interpretation of the measures I may recommend on the part of the people.

With a heart felt wish that the course I thus propose to adopt may prove a means of peace and good order I beg to subscribe myself

Your obedient servant
(signed) E. COLVILLE

Lower Fort Gary 26 *August* 1850¹

Sir J. H. Pelly
London

MY DEAR SIR

I addressed you on the 15 instant,² and as I have written to Mr. Secretary Barclay by this opportunity I do not think that I have anything very interesting to communicate to you, but as this is the last opportunity we shall have for some months I do not like to let it pass without writing you a few lines.

You will see by my letter to the Secretary that I have brought about the arrangement with respect to the government of the Colony that I mentioned in my last letter to you. Major Caldwell is so very undecided in his manner of transacting business, that I can hardly say that I have assumed the duties referred to with his sanction or consent; though he admits that it is the only course that remained open, and the somewhat didactic answer I have given to the petitions, soothed his vanity, of which he has an inadicate [sic] share, so that we are on the best terms with one another, and he expressed his opinion that we should work well together.

I thought it well to let it appear distinctly in my letter to the petitioners, that I acceded to their wishes very unwillingly, and merely because I could see no other way of carrying on the affairs of the Colony. As soon as this cause is despatched I intend to meet the Council and I have little doubt that I shall be able to get on smoothly enough. In fact I have no doubt that the Company's representative would always have much more influence in the Council than a person in Major Caldwell's position, as most of the members thereof either have, or to expect to have, some contract for tripping, cordwood &c. which indirectly influences them.

I think the angry feelings that were excited by the

¹ This copy (for Sir George Simpson) is in a clerk's handwriting and is endorsed: "Copy 1850 Red River 26 August Eden Colville to Sir J. H. Pelly Bt."

² No letter to Pelly of this date has been traced in the Company's archives.

proceedings in the case of Foss *v.* Pelly¹ and others, are gradually subsiding—as I mentioned in my last I have sent Mr. Pelly to the Upper Fort, to which place the accounts are now removed & placed under his management. This is a much more convenient arrangement, than keeping them at this establishment as has been the practice of late years. Next year Mr. Black intends to avail himself of his rotation of furlough, and I think Mr. Ballenden is in all respects the best officer, to whom this important charge can be entrusted, as he is thoroughly acquainted with the business, and I think deservedly popular with the settlers. As it would be not only unpleasant to both parties, but also disadvantageous to the business, that Mr. Pelly should remain here after Mr. Ballenden re-assumes the charge next year, I took an opportunity last week of speaking to Mr. Pelly regarding his future movements; and found that he would like to be sent to the Columbia; being of opinion that Mrs. Pelly is quite capable of bearing the journey. As he is a steady young man and a good accountant, I have no doubt his services will be useful either at Vancouver or Victoria, and I shall accordingly write to Sir George Simpson to request that a young gentleman, capable of managing the accounts at this place be sent up by the canoes next spring, so as to allow me to carry out this arrangement.

I shall be glad to have your decision on the question of supplies furnished to Capt. Foss as soon as possible. He is not on speaking terms with either Mr. Black or Mr. Pelly, and I have no doubt will be very troublesome. I think under any circumstances, his presence at the mess table was very objectionable as remarks are sometimes made, which it is not desirable should become public throughout the settlement. I can think of nothing of interest to communicate at present; should there be an opportunity *viâ* St. Peters this autumn I will again address.

I remain

very truly yours,

(signed) E. COLVILLE

¹ See Introduction, pp. ci–iii.

Lower Fort Garry 18 *Sepr.* 1850¹

A. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House

DEAR SIR

I addressed you last on 26. ulto. to which letter I beg now to refer you. The settlement continues perfectly healthy and tranquil, and the crops are generally secured in good order.

Mr. Ballenden has handed me your letter of 18 June² addressed to him, with its enclosures. It appears by the copy of letter from the Secretary at war to Captain Foss that "the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company has been applied to for a free passage for that gentleman through Canada"; and although you do not mention it in your letter, I take it for granted that that application has been complied with. It will be too late in the season for Captain Foss to proceed to Canada after his arrival from York Factory, but, should he be willing to go, I propose to furnish him with the means of proceeding viâ St. Peters to New York; and I think that £50 should cover his expenses from St. Peter's to Liverpool. I note your intimation that he is not to have a seat at the Company's Mess table, should he be detained here; and of course shall not carry out the arrangement respecting the payment of his supplies that I proposed in my last letter.

On 30 Aug. the express canoe from York Factory passed Fort Alexander, and by it we understood that the *Prince Rupert* had arrived at York Factory on 7. Aug.; and on 13th inst. by a small canoe from York Factory letters from England per ship came to hand. The packet list was dated 13 August, but by neither opportunity did I, or anybody else, receive a letter from York Factory, so that I am at a loss to know what

¹ This letter is addressed on the end page: "A. Barclay Esqr. Hudson's Bay House Fenchurch Street London". "Recd Nov 11/50" is written in red ink in Barclay's writing at the beginning of the letter.

² The London copy of the letter to Ballenden is in A.6/28, fos. 143-4. The letter, although short, covers the subjects of goods sent to Red River, alterations in the Land Deed, Captain Foss, annuities for John Favell's children, and currency notes.

vessels have arrived at York, or at what time they did arrive.¹ The boats from the Factory may be expected daily, and I trust by them to hear of the safe arrival of the several vessels despatched this season.

By a letter from Chief Factor Wm. Sinclair² dated Fort Frances 17 Aug.³ I learn that the Boats with the outfit for Lac la Pluie District had performed their journey to Albany & back without accident. Mr. Sinclair describes the navigation of the Albany River as "dangerous, and turbulent". All the goods from Canada have passed Fort Alexander on their way to Norway House.

The plain hunters have all returned to the settlement, and I regret to say the quantity of pemican is not so large as I had anticipated. I learn from Mr. Black that he has only secured 400 bags of pemican, and 200 bales of dried meat. I have no doubt that some has also been secured at Pembena, but I have not, as yet, been advised of the quantity. I am sorry to say that there has been some trouble in the plains between the hunters and a band of Sioux Indians, in which two half breeds from this settlement were killed, and one wounded severely in the knee. The half breeds are much excited about this, and I am afraid there will be more fighting hereafter.

On the 3rd instant the English mare died, after a few hours illness; I had her opened and found her heart was enlarged to twice its natural size, and, I have no doubt, the cause of her death was inflammation of that organ. She has left a fine mare foal, about four months, which, I trust, we may succeed in rearing. The stallion has improved very much, as does the bull that was imported at the same time.⁴

Alexander Sutherland, a respectable Scotch settler, is

¹ The *Prince Rupert* anchored on August 8 and the *Prince of Wales* arrived in the outer roads on August 12 (B.239/a/173).

² For a biography see *H.B.S.*, III, 456-8.

³ D.7/1.

⁴ See Introduction, p. xxx, and D.5/29, J. Black to Sir G. Simpson, dated Red River Settlement, November 29, 1850, "... we have lost both the English grey mare and her foal—both having died at the Lower Fort—so that the breed is entirely lost. But 'Melbourne' still looks as well as ever—and it is to be hoped that neither disease nor accident will soon befall him...".

anxious to obtain a steerage passage for his niece, Betsy Sutherland by the York Ship next year, and, will bind himself to pay the passage money. Should the Committee be inclined to grant his request I shall feel obliged by your communicating it to her, addressed as under,

Miss Betsy Sutherland
at John Sutherland's
Parish of Loath
Holmsdale¹
Sutherlandshire

He states that her brother would come out with her on a five years engagement to the Company.

Mr. Chief Trader Clouston² with the loaded carts arrived at the Upper Fort on 16 inst. after a long journey from St. Peter's. He took fifty days to perform the distance, meeting with much detention from the unusual height of the Rivers, and the wet state of the road. The goods have come to hand in good order, with the exception of a few kegs of sugar slightly damaged by water.

I remain
Very truly yours
E. COLVILE

Lower Fort Garry 28th Novr. 1850³

Archd. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House

DEAR SIR

I had last the pleasure of addressing you on the 18

¹ In the letter "Holmsdale" is crossed out and "Golspie" substituted in Barclay's writing. A.6/29, fo. 62d., A. Barclay to E. Colville dated London, April 11, 1851, "... I cannot inform you whether Betsy Sutherland and her brother intend to embrace the opportunity of joining their relative at the Settlement this year".

² Robert Clouston (see p. ci, n. 4), who entered the Company's service in 1838. He was appointed a Chief Trader in 1850.

³ A.11/95. The duplicate in Colville's writing, but without enclosures, is in

September, since which date I am happy to state that the settlement has continued perfectly tranquil.

On 25 September Captain Foss with the detachment of pensioners¹ under his charge arrived at this establishment, and I lost no time in making arrangements for conveying him to St. Peter's, and contracted with McDermot to furnish him with horses, guides, and men, | for which we were to pay him £90. This price may appear unreasonable, but owing to the advanced period of the season McDermot was of opinion that all the horses would be rendered unserviceable for the ensuing winter, and in all probability the greater part of them would be left on the road on their return. | I agreed with Captain Foss that he should have an additional sum of £50 to clear all his expenses from St. Peter's to Liverpool, with which he expressed himself perfectly content. I also informed him that on the part of the Company I would take off his hands such of the farming utensils, cattle, furniture &c, as I saw any prospect of our disposing of without loss, and that I would dispose of the remainder to the best advantage after his departure, and account to him for the proceeds. In a word I offered to do all in my power to facilitate his departure. He expressed himself perfectly satisfied with these arrangements, and agreed with McDermot, that he should take his departure on the morning of the 5 October, by which time he would have made up his Quarterly Pay list, and handed over his charge to Major Caldwell. On 29 September I received a note stating his intention of remaining till the Spring, and a correspondence ensued between us, copy of which I herewith enclose. You will remark by my letter of 29 September that I had no means of ascertaining when Captain Foss' pay from the Company was to cease, and I have accordingly given him credit in the books here up to the 5 October, on which day he agreed to

A.12/13. The following remarks were made by Barclay at the beginning of the letter: (in red ink), "Recd March 24/51"; (in pencil), "the part with the brackets [] to be copied for Col. Tullock". The part actually copied is marked by a line in the margin.

¹The second draft. See Introduction, p. xciii, and Martin, *Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures*, p. 204.

leave the settlement, and at which date I consider his connection with the Company ceased. Had he started on that day, and used due expedition, I think he might have landed in Liverpool in about 60 to 70 days, but as I have never passed that way myself I am not quite certain on this point, but Mr. Chief Factor Ballenden will be able to give you correct information on this subject, should it appear that the Company are bound to pay Captain Foss till he lands in England. With regard to the lot of land, of which Captain Foss was in possession, I have agreed with him that the improvements, made by him thereon, shall be valued by arbitration, and the amount placed to his credit. It appears that we are bound to hold this for his successor, who, Major Caldwell asserts, will make his appearance next year, and who, I suppose, will reimburse us the value of the improvements.

I beg to forward for the information of the Governor and Committee copy of correspondence with Mr. Ross on behalf of the "Presbyterian Community of Red River Settlement", and have to request instructions on this point at your earliest convenience. This question was brought under Sir George Simpson's notice on his arrival here in July last, and he stated that the shortness of his stay would not permit him to investigate the matter thoroughly, and therefore left it to me to settle. As the only propositions I felt myself justified in making have not altogether met the views of the Community in question I beg to lay the whole matter before the Committee. I consider the propositions I have made will amply meet the justice of the case, and hope that they may meet with the sanction of the Committee. I am the more anxious that this question should be settled, because the Bishop of Rupert's Land wishes to rebuild the Upper Church, and I think he will have some difficulty in carrying this out, while a portion of the original pew holders are, as at present, dissatisfied. I am of opinion, that they will find so much difficulty in raising a sufficient sum to build and endow a church, that when the apparent grievance is done away with, in all probability the agitation of this question will cease. The "Frog Plain", is in a very convenient locality for the purpose, in the heart of

the Scotch Settlement, and is about the size of an ordinary lot of land, though from the swampy nature of the soil I believe a very small portion of it is fit for cultivation. I may mention that the individuals, who think themselves aggrieved, are among the most thriving and orderly of the population.

As there seems to be a possibility of addition next year to the corps of Enrolled Pensioners (an addition, which, in my humble opinion, is by no means necessary) I beg to take the opportunity of suggesting that in any arrangements that may be made hereafter, it will be absolutely necessary to alter the condition that the Company should locate them on lots within two miles of the Fort, as it is impossible without purchasing land at an enormous rate, to locate any more men within that distance. The distance should be encreased to four miles at least. The last detachment of pensioners have been located within the two miles, though very few of the lots contain the full quantity of 20 acres, and money compensation will be given to make up the deficiency.

I had an interview a few days since with Mr. Pridham, who came out this year as assistant teacher in the Boy's School here, the object of which was to know whether a free passage could be given to a lady, to whom he is engaged to be married, and with whom he proposes to set up a school for young ladies. I received a note from the Bishop of Rupert's Land informing me that Mr. Pridham has his full sanction and approval in his present step. As I believe it has been the practice on former occasions that the Governesses for the School here should be allowed a free passage I hope the Committee will be pleased to allow one in this instance. The name of the lady in question is, I understand, Miss Isles,¹ and I suppose she will herself communicate with the Committee.

Mr. Black will doubtless address you by this opportunity on the details of the business of this district, which is

¹ A.6/29, fo. 62d., A. Barclay to E. Colvile, April 11, 1851, "Miss Isles, the lady who was to have gone out to be married to Mr. Pridham, has determined not to go for the present at least".

immediately under his charge. Since I wrote last we have had no communication from the Interior.

I remain,

My dear Sir

Very truly yours

E. COLVILE

Colony Gardens *Octr.* 28th 1850¹

(Copy)

DEAR SIR

In answer to several documents I had the honour of laying before Sir George Simpson, claiming as our property, Lots No. 3 and 4 of 10 chains frontage each, which were granted to us by Lord Sil Kirk, for our church and School establishment; but taken possession of by the English Missionaries, and now occupied by the Bishop of Rupert's Land: it is satisfactory for us to observe however, that Sir George Simpson has taken a favourable view of our claims by desiring us to lay them before you for final adjustment. Agreeable therefore to his excellency's request, I beg to hand you, along with this, all the facts of the case, in the agreeable anticipation that you will be able to adjust our claims in the premises on just and equitable principles.

On perusing the accompanying evidence, it will, we hope plainly appear, that, whoever is to blame, we have not been fairly dealt with, and that in the position we now stand, even handed justice demands that we should be put in possession of our two lots, church and church yard, nevertheless, in consideration of the many obligations we owe to the Company, under whose mild and indulgent government we have so long enjoyed the blessings of peace, and likewise acknowledge

¹ The enclosures are in a clerk's writing and are endorsed in Eden Colvile's writing: "Copy Correspondence respecting claim of Presbyterians to the Church reserve". Barclay noted "Recd. March 24/51" in red ink at the beginning of the enclosures.

obligations to the English Missionaries, under this view of the case, rather than disturb his Lordship the Bishop of Ruperts Land, or the Church establishment under the missionaries, we will not refuse, but accept of a moderate and reasonable equivalent in lieu thereof. The equivalent alluded to, ought rather to have arisen from others than us, and our offering to accept of any thing less than what is our just right, might be construed as implying a defect in our claims; to this argument however, we decidedly state, that we are purely governed in the matter, by motives of accommodation, and would rather, in some degree, sustain loss, than give rise to the voice of discord, or cause bad feelings in any quarter.

The equivalent then we would propose, in order to expedite and facilitate the arrangement, is simply this, give us one lot of land in a suitable and convenient place in our community, for a church and school establishment, and a sum of money to aid us in building another church, this granted free and unconditional, will be considered conclusive.

I have the honour to be with much
respect and consideration

Dear Sir

Your most Obt. Servt.

(signed) A. Ross

For and in behalf of the
Presbyterian community
of Red River Settlement.
To

Eden Colvile Esqr.
Govr. of Rupert's Land.

Lower Fort Garry 30th Octr. 1850¹

(Copy)

A. Ross Esqr.
Colony Gardens

DEAR SIR

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 28th

¹ Cf. Ross, *Red River Settlement*, pp. 355-6.

instant, written in behalf of the Presbyterian community of Red River Settlement, and beg to hand you for the information of the said community the following reply.

Without expressing any opinion on the validity of the claims as advanced in your letter and the accompanying documents, I am decidedly of opinion that the settlement of this long vexed question is most desireable, and am much pleased with the moderate tone of your letter, which seems to hold out a fair prospect of finally settling the question.

The proposition I have to make is as under—First, That the present Church, which is manifestly in such a state of dilapidation as to render it necessary that it should be rebuilt forthwith, should be valued by arbitration or otherwise, as old materials, and a proportionate amount be paid to each seceder from the congregation.

Second—That the right to burial in the existing church yard be reserved—With these two propositions the Bishop of Rupert's Land has expressed to me his entire concurrence.

Third—That a grant of the Frog Plain shall be made to certain individuals, to be named by the Presbyterian community, to be held by them in trust for the congregation, for the purpose of site for Church, Church yard, Manse, School house and Glebe, reserving however a right of way, say 36 feet wide, either on the upper or lower side of the said Frog Plain from the main road to the River. I would be willing to make this grant, as soon as the Church shall be erected and the Presbyterian Minister in occupation thereof.

Fourth—That, at the next meeting of the Council of the Northern Department, I should recommend a grant of £150 towards the erection of the church—Such sum, if voted, to be paid into the hands of the Trustees of the Congregation, so soon as preparations are made for commencing the work.

You may consider this arrangement, as far as I am concerned, as definitely settled, but I deem it right to inform you that I have no instructions on the subject from the Governor and Committee, and that it is possible, though I

NOVEMBER 7, 1850

41

think not probable, that they may take a different view of the matter.

I remain

Dear Sir

Very truly yours

(signed) E. COLVILE

Colony Gardens

7th Novr. 1850

(Copy)

DEAR SIR

On the receipt of your letter of 30th Ult: I laid it before the heads of the presbyterian community for their approval, and I regret to say, that after a careful perusal, with reference to the equivalent proposed; that the unanimous opinion was, that fettered as the conditions were, with so many restrictions and uncertainties, it could not be accepted.

In coming to this conclusion, we hope your excellency will be pleased to observe, that we have neither retracted our words, nor altered our position: what we said we would accept, and what we were given to understand we should receive, that we still adhere to, and will abide by; only the equivalent must be freed from all restrictions and uncertainties, or they compel us, however reluctant, to stand in the position we were before. We are

Dear Sir

With much consideration & respect

Your Obt. Servants

(signed) A. ROSS

For and in behalf of the
Presbyterian community
of Red River Settlement

„	ANGUS MATHESON
„	ALEXR. MATHESON
	his
„	ALEXR. X POLSON
	mark
„	JOHN McBEATH
„	JOHN MATHESON
„	DONALD MURRAY
„	DONALD BANNERMAN

To

Eden Colvile Esqr.
Govr. of Rupert's Land

Lower Fort Garry 11th Novr. 1850

(Copy)

A. Ross Esqr.

Colony Gardens

DEAR SIR

I received last night your letter of 7th inst. in which you acknowledge the receipt of mine of 30th Ult. and state that the equivalent therein proposed to the Presbyterian Community is fettered with so many restrictions and uncertainties, that it could not be accepted.

I feel bound to state that I have been disagreeably surprised at the receipt of your communication, as I had hoped that, as far as in me lay, I had set the matter at rest. After a careful reperusal of my letter, the sole restriction that I can discover therein, is the reservation of a right of way to the river 36 feet in width, which reservation I have made solely for the public convenience, and is of itself, of so trifling a nature, that I cannot conceive that it has prevented the proposed arrangement. It would have been more satisfactory, had you mentioned the restrictions objected to, as I candidly confess that with the exception above named I can see no restriction whatever. In fact, to use your own words, in your letter of 28th ulto. I think that I have proposed "to give you one lot of land in a suitable and convenient place in your community, for a church and School establishment, and a sum of money to aid you in building another church; this granted, free and unconditional, will be considered conclusive".

I proceed now to consider the second ground of objection to my proposition, namely, its uncertainty. You must be surely well aware that I am not authorised to make a grant of money for any purpose without the concurrence of the gentlemen composing the Council of the Northern Department, but from their well known liberality I cannot doubt, that, when I propose that such a grant shall be made, it will be cheerfully acceded to. It must be also well known to you that the Governor and Committee have the power of disallowing a vote of the Council, but this power is so seldom exercised,

that as I mentioned in my letter of 30 ulto., I consider it very improbable that in this instance it will be exercised. It may have been an excess of caution on my part to have mentioned this, but I never like to promise more than I feel sure of performing: and it is evident, that should the proposition I have laid down not be carried out, the Presbyterian Community will be in no worse position than they are at present. If they give up their pretensions to the church lot on condition of receiving a certain equivalent, & that condition is not complied with, their pretensions must remain, as they are at present.

On the whole I trust that you and your friends may reconsider your determination, and that the propositions contained in my last letter may meet with your acceptance, but, at any rate, I think any impartial person, on the perusal of the correspondence, will feel, that if this question is not now settled, the blame does not rest with me.

I am, My dear Sir

Very truly yours

(signed) E. COLVILLE

Colony Gardens

Novr. 19th 1850

(Copy)

Eden Colvile Esqr.

&c &c &c

DEAR SIR

I have to acknowledge the receipt of yours of 11th Inst. and according to your wish proceed to notice the restrictions and uncertainties alluded to, and hope you will take it in good part, and patiently hear what we have got to say on the subject, —1st In reference to the lot, “ I shall be willing to make this grant as soon as the church shall be erected, and a Presbyterian minister in occupation thereof ”. This is one of the restrictions we complain of;—We have been told, by the Company’s legal adviser, and that from the bench, long before now, that a

Governor here is not responsible for the acts of his predecessor; suppose then, that another Governor is appointed in your place, before the Church could be erected, or the minister be in occupation thereof; in that case, what security have we? and besides, had it been a gift from your excellency you would have had every right to attach conditions to it; but as an equivalent, or exchange, that right, in our opinion, cannot exist, The fact is simply this, give us the deed for our lot, it will be for us to erect the Church, and get a minister as soon as we can.

2ndly "At the next meeting of the Council of the Northern Department, I should recommend a grant of £150 towards the erection of the Church, such sum, if voted, to be paid into the hands of the trustees of the congregation, so soon as preparations are made for commencing the work". This is one of the uncertainties: what encouragement does this hold out for us to "make preparations" no man will work unless he has a certainty before hand of being paid,

3d "I deem it right to inform you, that I have no instructions on the subject, from the Govr. and Committee, and that it is possible, though not probable, that they may take a different view of the matter". A different view of the matter by the Governor and Committee, would upset all, so that from all these statements, it must appear evident, that we have not one certainty before us; but on the contrary; all is doubt and uncertainty.

We are however perfectly sensible of your good intentions, and willing, most willing to do all in our power to facilitate the arrangement, on the conditions proposed; but under all the circumstances, we can only see one straight forward course to be pursued in order to attain the end proposed; Far be it from us to press your excellency for time, let the matter then stand as it is, till an answer is received from the Council of the Northern Department and also from the Govr. and Committee, and then matters can be speedily brought to a conclusion, and that to the satisfaction of all parties, without doubt or difficulty; as no equivalent can be accepted by us unless freed from all restrictions, and uncertainties; we can have no objections to

the path way of 36 feet. I have the honor to be with much consideration and esteem

Dear Sir

For and in behalf of
the Presbyterian community
of Red River Settlement.

Your Obt. Hble. Servt.

(signed) A. Ross

To

Eden Colvile Esqr.

Govr. of Ruperts Land.

Lower Fort Garry 22nd Novr. 1850

(Copy)

A. Ross Esqr.

Colony Gardens

DEAR SIR

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 19th Inst. and in reply thereto have to state that I will in accordance with the request therein contained, lay the whole correspondence on the subject of the proposed grant for a Presbyterian Church before the Governor and Committee. It will be therefore unnecessary for me to make any observations upon your letter, and I will merely add that I will use my best endeavours to get the matter finally settled as soon as possible.

I remain

Dear Sir

Your truly

(signed) E. COLVILE

Lower Fort Garry 7 Feby. 1851¹

Archd. Barclay Esqr.

Hudson's Bay House

MY DEAR SIR,

I addressed you last on 28th November, and I am

¹A.12/13. This letter bears the remark: "Recd. June 16th 1851" in W. G. Smith's writing in red ink. The remarks: "Land to Pensioner Warrice

happy to state that nothing has occurred since that date to disturb the tranquillity of the settlement, with the exception of an unusual number of blackened eyes among the Pensioners during the Christmas holidays.

On 11 January I received advices from York Factory up to 1st December, and from Norway House up to 26 Decr. at which dates nothing definite was known as to the trade; but I fear that, from the entire disappearance of the rabbits, the prospects are not very encouraging, and in all probability there will be much misery and starvation among the Indians in these districts.

I visited the Company's establishment at Pembina¹ about the middle of last month, and found that the trade was not so good as at the corresponding period last year. Lynx have entirely disappeared in that neighbourhood, while Fishers and Martens are slightly on the increase. I think on the whole the result of this year's operations will be a great discouragement to the American trader, Mr. Kittson; as I understand he has made very heavy advances to Indians and half breeds, and I think the decrease in his returns this year as compared with last will be at least equal to that at our establishment. In fact, from the want of rabbits, even if there were furs to be found, the Indians are unable to hunt them, and Mr. Setter² has been in several instances forced to send out men with provisions to save the lives of the Indians.

I beg to enclose a copy of a somewhat tedious correspondence

[see p. 72]” and “T Simpsons child” made by Barclay in pencil also appear at the beginning of the letter. In his reply to Colville dated June 23, 1851 (A.6/29, fo. 89), Barclay said “. . . there is a charge against the Estate of the late Thos. Simpson of £2. 3. 3. which is not explained, but presumed to have been advanced for the maintenance of an illegitimate child. No further advances are to be made by the Company on account of T. Simpson, there being no chance of repayment by his Executors”.

¹ See Introduction, p. lxviii. Bond, *Minnesota and its Resources* . . . , p. 277, (September 1851), “Just beyond [the Forty-ninth Parallel] is the first trading post and buildings of the Hudson's Bay Company, in this direction, a rival post of Kittson's. The buildings are built of logs and mud, one story high, and thatched with straw, are very warm and comfortable, and built around an open square”.

² George Setter. See *H.B.S.*, XVI, 250, n. 3, and Bond, *Minnesota and its Resources* . . . , p. 277.

I have had with Captain Foss with regard to the improvements made by him on the farm allotted to him, as I think it probable he may, after his return to England, make a claim for further compensation, to which, in my opinion, he has no pretension whatever. I have gone so fully into the particulars in my letters to him, that I think it hardly necessary to make further comments. On receiving notice of Captain Foss' recall, I waited on him, and we agreed to leave the matter to arbitration. He named Mr. McDermott, and I, on the part of the Company named Mr. Ross. These two gentlemen unfortunately selected a son of Mr. Ross as umpire, and it was this circumstance that induced me to admit Captain Foss' claim for an additional ten pounds for the dwelling house. On all other points the arbitrators were unanimous, so that the opinion of the umpire was not required.

In connection with this subject I may remark that there is a balance against Captn. Foss in the books, amounting to £21. 5. 9. for supplies &c. advanced him before my arrival here, which balance I think it will be impossible to collect here, as I understand he has no means at his disposal, and is even in debt to some of the petty traders in the settlement.

I regret to state that the wife of one of the Pensioners, Murphy¹ by name, was found frozen to death on the morning of the 1st inst: close to her own house. She had been drinking beer in the house of another Pensioner, and was in a state of intoxication on leaving his house.

I remain

Very truly Yours
E. COLVILE

Copy of correspondence with Captain Foss²

November 4th 1850

DR. SIR

I only on Saturday last received a copy of the Valuation

¹ The wife of either Michael Murphy or Andrew Murphy. See Martin, *Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures*, p. 204.

² The enclosures are in a clerk's writing.

of my property on Peltier Point, otherwise I wd have communicated with you on the subject before. The valuation is so absurdly low that I must protest against it. The cottage was erected last fall at a cost for labor alone of £30—a sum of £26. 6 was paid to two Carpenters, Bruce & Fidler, Mr. Ballenden was present when I made the arrangement with the former for his portion of the work for £21. 10—it appears Mr. Ross valued the house at £30! Mr. McDermott at £50 and states it to be cheap at that. The hay (although it ought not to have been valued as the rest of the farm produce was not) Mr. Ross only allowed 2s/6 a load for! on being asked would he dispose of his own at that price? he replied he would not: for a small house also erected last fall, at a cost of £4. 5 a sum of £1. 5 only has been allowed Mr. Ballenden was likewise present when I made the contract for this. For clearing portions of the land I paid £1. 10, and for ploughing 15s/ per acre and am only allowed £1. the quantity of land cannot be correctly ascertained unless surveyed.

I send with this the copy of the Valuation and have marked opposite to each the Amt. I should be satisfied with for the property valued, and I can assure you that should you consent to it, I would even then be at considerable loss

Dr. Sir truly yours

(signed) C. VAUGHAN FOSS

E. Colville Esqr.

Governor of R. Land

(Copy)

Valuation of Captn. Foss's improvements on Peltier Point, appraised by Mr. McDermot and myself yesterday, vizt.¹

1	Dwelling House 36 × 20 feet—three outer rooms, three twelve panes windows, two brass locks 50	40	—	—
2	A Summer House 6½ × 6½ feet, brass lock £3	1	5	—
3	The line of Front fencing 130 spaces, } <i>nothing has been allowed for putting up this fencing</i> of six rails each, at 5/- pr 100 and 250 poplar pickets } 3/9 at 4/- pr 100 just as they stand	2	9	—
4	35 Loads of Hay at 4/- pr Load	7	—	—
5	Improvements on 12 acres land £18	12	—	—
	<i>supposing the land not to be more or less than 12 acres. I understand the usual sum allowed in the Settlement for breaking and cleaning wood land is £1. 10 per acre</i>	£62	14	—

(signed) { ALEXR. ROSS
ANDW. McDERMOT
WILLIAM ROSS

To
John Black Esqr.
&c &c
Upper Fort Garry

October 15th 1850

¹ The amounts and remarks in italics are shown in red ink on the copy.

Lower Fort Garry *6th Novr.* 1850

Captain Foss

DEAR SIR

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 4th inst: enclosing copy of valuation of your improvements at Peltier Point, & protesting against the same as absurdly low. As this amount has been settled by arbitration, which we both agreed was the fairest & most satisfactory way of settling the matter, I do not feel authorised to set aside the report of the arbitrators, who could have had no motive in undervaluing your property —with respect to the hay, which we are by no means bound to take, I have not the slightest objection that it should be struck out of the account, & left to you to dispose of to the best advantage. I beg to assure you that I never spoke one syllable to any one of the arbitrators on the subject; but, at the same time, I feel bound to tell you, that in my opinion, they proceeded on a correct principle, when they valued the different items, at what they considered them actually worth, & not at what you paid for them. On the whole as you agreed that the value of the improvements should be settled by arbitration, & as I cannot admit that the arbitrators have acted corruptly or partially, I do not think that your protest is admissable.

I am &c &c
(signed) E C

November 12th 1850

DR. SIR

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th inst. and have to express a hope that as you do not think my protest admissable, you will allow the matter to go before the Committee tis rather unusual to see a Son called in as umpire in a matter in which his Father was acting as Arbitrator, tis but reasonable to suppose that filial respect might bias the judgement.

I never for a moment thought that you had spoken to any one

on the subject of the Valuation, further than directing that it should take place. nor was it my intention to attribute either corruptness or partiality to any of the parties concerned, men in such cases, err as frequently from ignorance as either of the above motives, and my object in stating the price Mr. Ross placed upon the hay, was simply to shew, that as he undervalued one article he might have done so with all the others and I firmly believe he has. I most readily subscribe to the principle that they were not bound to take into consideration my expenditure, but you may remember desiring me to make out a statement as near as I could of what I had laid out. As the case now stands I am at very considerable loss and the Company gain the difference between the Valuation and the Amt. I stated I wd. be satisfied with and I consider under the circumstances that they ought not to look for any profit but be satisfied that no loss occurs to them

Dr. Sir &c &c

signed C. VAUGHAN FOSS

Lower Fort Garry 6th Decr. 1850

Capt. Foss

DEAR SIR,

After consulting with Messrs. Ross & McDermot I have come to the conclusion to allow you Ten pounds for the house on Peltier Point over & above the valuation made by those gentlemen. The other items I must absolutely decline to alter in any way. The hay I have struck altogether out of the valuation & leave it to you to dispose of to the best advantage. I have directed the Accountant to give you credit in our books accordingly. The next time I am at the Upper Fort I will get your Account Current made out & if it be found correct hope to get your acknowledgment thereof.

I am &c &c

(signed) E. C.

December 13th 1850

DR. SIR

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th inst., intimating your intention of allowing £10 more than the Valuation for the house on Peltier Point, and absolutely declining to alter in any way the other items.

If you as representative of a wealthy Company consider yourself bound thus to contend for a few pounds, it surely must be equally legitimate if not more so, that I for myself should do likewise.

I shall therefore again raise the question, "was the land assigned me by Mr. Ballenden in accordance with the conditions under which I came out? two years ago I refused to accept it, considering that land requiring an outlay of three times its value to render it fit for cultivation, could not come within the meaning of the clause The land to be of a description fit for cultivation. it was decided against me by Major Caldwell, Mr. Thom, and Mr. Ballenden but without altering my belief, and I still refuse to accept it, nor should I have done so, did not Mr. Ballenden make me a promise, that if on reference home, my view was found to be right, I should be refunded my outlay; I then did not think it worth while to prosecute the matter, but I do now; Mr. Thom's opinion was the only one to which I attached any value, inasmuch as, in a legal point it might be correct but certainly not in equity.

I consider it most unreasonable that the cost of putting up the fencing should not be allowed; the summer house may be considered a mere matter of fancy, I therefore do not desire that it should receive further consideration as I can dispose of it myself.

I respectfully but most positively decline to sign any document declaring satisfaction at or a belief in the correctness up to this, of any transaction in connexion with myself since my return from York Factory; before I shall receive replies to my letters forwarded to England.

Dr. Sir &c &c

(signed) C. VAUGHAN FOSS

Lower Fort Garry 16th Decr. 1850

Captn. Foss

DEAR SIR

I received your letter of 13th inst. on Saturday & take the 1st opportunity of replying to the same.

If you consider that as representative of a wealthy Coy. as you term it in your letter, I am bound to admit all claims of a small amount, without satisfying myself of the correctness of those claims, I can only say we take a widely different view of my duties.

With regard to the question you now raise, as to the land not being in accordance with the condition under which you came out, I beg to state that, (although I agree in opinion with Major Caldwell, Mr. Thom & Mr. Ballenden) I do not see how it bears upon the point at issue.

We agreed that it was just & reasonable that you should be allowed the value of your improvements. We also agreed that the fixing of the value of those improvements should be left to arbitration. You offered no objection to the arbitrator I named. Had you done so I would have removed him at once & named another. Surely that being the case the opinion of the arbitrators should be considered final.

As, however, you protested against this decision I took the opportunity of talking the matter over with Messrs. McDermot & Ross. The former, your own nominee, informed me that he considered that the house had been put ten pounds below its real value; the latter declared that you had been allowed full value for every thing. Under these circumstances, I determined, in order that you might have no reasonable ground of complaint, to allow you this additional sum, not as a matter of right; because I never heard of a case left to arbitration, in which it was not understood that the decision of the arbitrators was final, but as I before stated, to remove any cause of complaint whatever. The amount, as now settled, may be taken as the unanimous opinion of the arbitrators & I must therefore decline from interfering with it.

With respect to the acknowledgment I requested of the

correctness of your A/c, I, of course, only expected an acknowledgement of the correctness of the different items, and not an acquittance of all claims against the Coy. as I am aware of the claim you have for pay up to the time of your arrival in England, the correctness of which claim I cannot take upon myself to decide, as I have no instructions on the matter.

I am sorry to find that you are unable to express satisfaction at any transaction in connexion with yourself since your return from Y I can only say, that I have done all in my power to suit your convenience, & meet your wishes, in so far as I could consistently with my duties to my employers. Allow me to add that I shall still be happy to do so for the future.

I am &c &c
(signed) E. C.

Red River *January 11th 1851*

DR. SIR

Your letter of the 16th December I beg to reply to, in doing so I am anxious to remove the impression that I intended any comment on the manner in which you feel yourself bound to perform the duties of your position—far from it—my object was merely to do away with any idea you might entertain that I was actuated by any motives of opposition the difference between us being then of such trifling amt.

Tis quite true, we agreed to leave matters to arbitration but I consider the proceeding informal from a circumstance which I pointed out in one of my letters and under the circumstances I do not suppose you wd. be desirous to compel me to abide by it. I certainly wd. be quite satisfied with the Amt. you have signified your attention of allowing for the house, but of course if you consider I have no right to it, I cannot accept of it.

You say. With regard to the question I have raised about the land assigned to me that you do not see how it bears upon the point at issue, I think it does inasmuch as one of the items in the list of the Arbitrators is compensation—for what? cleaning and breaking up the land so as to render it fit for

cultivation; surely if the land was in accordance with the conditions, I have no right to this you I therefore think, in agreeing with the decision of the Arbitrators on this point acquiesce in my view although you state you join in the opinions of three other gentlemen who were adverse to it.

I beg to enclose extract from the conditions and the circular to Staff officers with my observations I consider myself not only entitled to the full sum I expended on the land with interest thereon for two years but also to compensation equivalent to the produce of 100 acres for the same period.

Dr. Sir &c &c

(signed) C. VAUGHAN FOSS

Extracts from the Printed conditions and from the Circular addressed to Staff Officers of Pensioners dated War Office *1st May 1848*.

Extract 1st The ground to be of a description fit for cultivation and within two miles of the Fort.

Obser.—I do not consider any land fit for cultivation whereon impediment to that process exists. A swamp might have been with equal justice assigned to me. There is nothing in the Paragraph pointing to the future, on the contrary The ground to be of a description & not that might or can be made fit for cultivation.

Extract 2nd On the termination of the 7 years the Staff Officer shall be entitled also to a grant of treble the extent of uncultivated land from the H.B. Company, as near the vicinity of the Settlement as it can be obtained.

Obsern. It is quite clear the word uncultivated is used here in Antithesis to the first Extract. The land was the inducement held out to Staff Officers to Volunteer. The pay is the same as those on home service receive. The land therefore was the boon, common sense forbids one considering any grant of land as such, which wd. require an outlay of three or four times its value to render it fit for agricultural purposes. On these

grounds two years ago I refused the land and on these grounds I now feel myself justified in considering that there has been a breach of contract on the part of the Honb. H. B. Company.

Lower Fort Garry 29th Jany. 1850 [1]

Captain Foss

DR. SIR

Your letter dated 11th Jany. only came to hand on 27th inst. which will account for my not having answered it before.

I see no use in carrying on our correspondence on the subject of the improvements at Point Peltier, inasmuch as I do not feel justified in doing more than I proposed in my communication of 6th Decr. namely, that I should allow you ten pounds over and above the valuation of the arbitrators.

I certainly cannot admit your claim for compensation equivalent to the produce of 100 acres for two years, but should the Govr. & Committee take the same view of the printed conditions as you do, they will, doubtless arrange the matter with you after your return to England.

I am &c &c
(signed) E. C.

Lower Fort Garry 4 June 1851¹

Archd. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House
London

SIR

1. I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated London 6 Decr. 1850;² and beg to refer you to my communication from this place under date 7 February.

¹ A.12/13. The remark "Recd Sep 27/51" in red ink in Barclay's writing appears at the top of the letter. The enclosures are in a clerk's writing.

² A.6/29, fos. 16-18.

2. As Captain Foss never made any application to me for any allowance for Mess Expenses, and as I consider that his remaining in the Settlement during the past winter was entirely for his own convenience I have not made any arrangement with him on the subject. He has been living in private lodgings and entirely at his own expense.

3. It is very satisfactory to learn that the Company's Ships arrived safely, and I trust that they brought their returns to a favorable market.

I regret to remark that by the comparative statement you enclose, it appears that there was a deficiency in almost every item, as compared with the previous year.

4. I shall have much pleasure in communicating to Messrs. Sinclair and Clouston the approbation of the Committee for their activity on their journeys from Albany and St. Peters, respectively.

5. I am in hopes that from this District we shall be able to meet in full the requisition from McKenzie River for plain provisions, as the returns from Pembina, and some of the other outposts are better than we had anticipated.

6. I have communicated to Alexander Sutherland, and William Driver that their requests for passages for their relatives will be complied with.¹

7. I received the twenty commissions² referred to in your letter, and transmitted them to such of the gentlemen, as were within reach. I have addressed the Governor fully on this subject under private cover.

8. It will appear from my letter to you dated 28 November last, that Sir George Simpson was somewhat premature in representing the arrangement with the Presbyterians, as

¹ See p. 27 and p. 34, n. 1.

² A.6/29, fos. 16d.-17, Barclay to Colvile, London, December 6, 1850, "I enclose herewith twenty Commissions under the Common Seal of the Company, constituting the gentlemen respectively named therein Justices of the Peace. You will be pleased to deliver these Commissions to the several parties, who, when they have taken the oath of allegiance before Governor Caldwell may be considered duly qualified as Magistrates. With these Commissions you will receive a Dedimus directed to Major Caldwell authorising him to administer to each of the Justices the oath a copy of which is annexed thereto."

settled; but I am happy to say that on the receipt of your letter, which removed all uncertainty in the matter, I reopened my correspondence with Mr. Ross on the subject, and that I finally concluded the arrangement on the terms mentioned in Sir George Simpson's letter.¹ I have the satisfaction of knowing that the arrangement I have made meets the views, both of His Lordship, the Bishop of Rupert's Land, and of the Presbyterian body; so that I trust that this question of thirty year's standing is now set at rest. I have told the Bishop that a conveyance of the land and premises will be made to him, whenever it suits his convenience. I shall have occasion to address you here after on this subject, as his Lordship seems to consider himself entitled to a sum of £200 over and above what he gave for the premises to the Executors of the late Mr. McAllum,² for the purpose of putting the house into repair. I told him that we would convey the property to him in the mean time, and that he had better make his claim for further allowance in writing, which he has promised to do.

9. In accordance with your instructions I handed to Mr. Thom on 10 April in presence of Dr. Bunn the Deed of revocation of his appointment of Recorder.

10. I beg to enclose an abstract of the account against the Bishop of Rupert's Land for sundries, supplied to him for two journeys on the business of his diocese. I found that the former of these, that to the Pas had been placed to a Suspense Account, and I therefore thought it better to leave it so, until I received instructions on the subject from the Governor and Committee. It appears that the Wesleyan Missionaries are allowed to travel free of expense, and I shall be glad to learn, whether the same advantages are to be granted to His Lordship.

¹ A letter from Simpson to the Governor and Committee dated Lachine, October 28, 1850 (D.4 71, fo. 230). Among other matters it referred to the offer made to Alexander Ross by Colville. The relevant extract from this letter, which was quoted in Barclay's letter to Colville dated December 6, 1850 (A.9 20, fo. 17), ends: "... I am happy to learn that this arrangement is satisfactory both to the Bishop and the Presbyterian party". According to Ross, *Red River Settlement*, pp. 350-7, Colville re-opened the correspondence on April 10, 1851, after receiving Barclay's letter of December 6, 1850, by the winter packet.

² The Rev. John Macallum. See Introduction, p. li.

If the Committee think fit that this should be done, I would venture to suggest that some limit be put upon it, say, that the travelling expenses in one year should not exceed £20.¹

11. I annex copy of my correspondence with Captain Foss, in continuation of what I transmitted with my letter of 7 Feby. By his last communication you will perceive that he states that he is at present engaged in taking affidavits in support of what he is pleased to call a Breach of Contract on the part of the Company with reference to the land allotted to him. I felt that it would be worse than useless for me to enter into a controversy with him on this point, but I beg to submit the following remarks on the subject.

1. On referring to a letter from L. Sullivan to Sir J. H. Pelly dated War Office 4 April 1849² it appears that The Secretary at War considers, that "if the soil is of such a character as, by the ordinary degree of exertion required from first settlers, to be made available for raising agricultural produce, no objection can be taken to it" Now I beg most distinctly to state that the land in question is of as good quality as any in the settlement, and from its situation preferable to most of the land in the neighbourhood, being on a point of the river, which from its shape renders a less expenditure of fencing necessary than the generality of land would require.

2. Captain Foss was so far from being of opinion that the land was of little value, that he was anxious, after he was re called that, instead of his improvements being valued, he should be allowed to purchase the lot, and sell it to the best advantage. I was unable to allow this, as I understood from Major Caldwell that we were bound to keep it for Captain Foss' successor.

3. In consequence of Captain Foss being recalled, before his term of service, (at the expiry of which he would have had a right to the said lot of land,) had been completed, I thought it just and reasonable that his

¹ See p. 160, notes 1 and 2.

² A.13/4, fo. 95.

improvements on this land should be valued by arbitration and paid for. To this he agreed and named an arbitrator. The arbitrators were unanimous on every point with the exception of one item, his house; and on this I allowed him £10 over and above the valuation, which made it the amount that his arbitrator thought the right value, so that the sum allowed him may be considered in accordance with the unanimous report of the arbitrators.

My opinion, therefore, is that Captain Foss has no claim to any thing further than what he has been already credited with, and I trust that the Governor and Committee will coincide herewith.

12. I am happy to say that the settlement continues in a tranquil and healthy state, and although the water has been nearly as high as last year, yet it soon subsided, and we had a good seed time, so that we hope for abundant crops.

13. I am not able, as yet, to give a detailed statement of the trade of this district, but both here and at Swan River it will be on the whole, I think, better than last year in every thing with the exception of buffalo robes. I have no late accounts from any of the other districts.

I shall again have this pleasure from York Factory whither I shall proceed,¹ for the purpose of holding the Council of the Northern Department, immediately on the arrival of the canoes from Canada, which we are now looking for daily.

I have the honor to be

Sir,

Your obedient Servant

E. COLVILE

¹Eden Colvile and his wife arrived at York Factory on July 5, 1851. He presided at the Council which began on July 7, and started on the return journey to Red River on July 19 (B.239/a/176 and B.239/k/3, p. 1).

FEBRUARY 8, 1851

61

Copy

Of correspondence between Governor Colville & Captain Foss

Captn. Foss

Lower Fort Garry 8th Feby. 1851

SIR

Herewith I beg to enclose copy of your account current with the H.B. Coy., balanced to 6th inst. by £21. 5. 9 to your Dr. which I trust will be found correct.

I am &c &c
signed E. C.

Feby. 12th 1851

SIR

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th Inst. accompanying my Acct. and must again protest against the injustice and the unfairness of the items introduced into it as compensation for my improvements on Peltier Point.

Alluding to your letter of the 29th of January in reply to mine on the subject of a breach of contract on the part of the Honble. H.B. Company, I cannot enter into your view of the necessity of referring the matter to the Governor and Committee—if any additional information was necessary the matter wd. be different but here we have every thing necessary to lead to a decision—the land in dispute and all requisite documents on the subject in justice to myself I shall be obliged to seek an arrangement previous to my leaving for England a place I may never reach.

I therefore leave it to you to say whether you wd. desire the matter should be brought before the Genl. Court or a jury presided over by the Sheriff.

I have the honor to be

Sir

Your very Obdt. Servt.

(signed) C. VAUGHAN FOSS

E. Colville Esqr.

Govr. Ruperts Land

&c &c

Fort Garry 21st Feby. 1851

Captn. Foss

SIR

In reply to your letter of 12 inst. I beg to state that with regard to the alleged breach of contract on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company, you can take such steps as you think fit.

I have to request the early settlement of the balance of your account.

I am &c &c

(signed) E. C.

May 29th 1851 Point Commerce

SIR

Adverting to your letter of the 29th Sept. last in which you state you will provide me with a passage to England either by the canoes or by St. Peters, I have the honor to solicit information as to which of those routs it is your intention to send me by.

I take this opportunity of acquainting you that I am taking affidavits from competent persons on the subject of the land assigned me in order to enable me to seek for compensation for what I consider to be a breach of contract on the part of the Company. My object in mentioning this now is that probably you might deem it necessary to put the Committee in possession of your views on the subject by the first opportunity and thereby tend to expedite an arrangement.

I have the honor to be, Sir

Your very Obdt Servt.

(signed) C. VAUGHAN FOSS

E. Colville Esqr.
Govr. of Rupert's Land

MAY 29, 1851

63

Lower Fort Garry 29th May 1851

Captn. Foss

SIR

I hasten to reply to your letter of this day, which has just arrived, in which you solicit the information as to which route I propose to send you by. Although, perhaps, the route by the canoes to Canada would be less expensive, yet as I am in some uncertainty at present as to the number of Canoes that will come up this year, I think on the whole it will be more convenient for me to make arrangements for your conveyance by St. Peter's. In fact I have already spoken to Mr. Henry Cook on the subject, who has agreed to furnish you with two good saddle horses, and a horse and cart, which I think should be amply sufficient to convey yourself and baggage to St. Peters, I propose to furnish you with a letter of credit authorising you to draw on the Companys Agent at Lachine for fifty pounds (£50) sterling, which I think should suffice for your expenses from St. Peter's to Liverpool.

As I think it probable that the party for St. Peters will take their departure at an early date, I shall feel obliged by your informing me with as little delay as possible whether you have any objection to this proposition, in order that I may close my arrangement with Mr. Cook. If you will send your reply to the Upper Fort I shall send directions to have it sent down without delay. Should you be unable or unwilling to join the party for St. Peter's I shall have to provide you a passage in a canoe to Canada, as I do not consider a small party going across the plains just at present altogether safe.

I feel obliged by your communicating the measures you are taking for obtaining compensation for what you consider a breach of contract on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company and shall address the Committee on the subject by the first opportunity.

I have the honor to be, Sir
Your very Obedt Servt.
(signed) E. COLVILLE

R. R. Suspense Account

To The Honble. Hudson's Bay Company Dr.

For the following in Lower Red River Distt. Out: 1850
vizt.

1850 July	To Amount of Supplies to The Rt. Revd. The Bishop of Rupert's Land for Voyage to the Pas Mission as p detailed Account in Fort Garry Office								
						32	6	8	
Feby.	Amount of Supplies to The Rt. Revd. The Bishop of Rupert's Land for Journey to the Partridge Crop Mission as p detailed account in Fort Garry Office								
						6	15	3	
					£	39	1	11	
	E. Ex. Fort Garry, Red River Settlement 2nd June 1851 A. Ed. Pelly								

JULY 15, 1851

65

York Factory 15 *July* 1851¹

To the Governor, Dep Governor
and Committee, Honble H B Coy

HONORABLE SIRS

I have to request that you will be pleased to direct that the sum of seventy pounds Sterling (say £70) be transferred from my account with the Honble Company to the credit of Sir George Simpson.

I have the honor to be

Honorable Sirs

Your most obedient Servant

E. COLVILLE

Lower Fort Garry 27th *Augt.* 1851²

Archibald Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House
London

SIR

1. I had the pleasure of receiving your letter dated 11th April³ by the Spring Express from Canada, to which, as it had reference entirely to Red River Affairs, I deferred replying until my return to this place.

2. Captain Foss took his departure from the Settlement on 22 June, and by the return of some of the party from St. Peters I learn that he had reached that place in safety, and have no doubt that by this time he has reached England. The

¹ A.12/13. The letter is addressed: "Archd. Barclay Esqr Hudson's Bay House Fenchurch Street London", and bears the following postmarks: (black, circular), "Sault Ste. Marie C.W Sp 16 1851"; (red, circular), "Orillia C.W Sp 19 1851"; (red, circular), "Montreal Sp 24 1851"; and (red, circular), "JD 12 Oc 12 1851". Apparently the cost of postage (noted in ink above the address) was 1s. 2d. The following note is written on the letter "Dr OF 26 Cr OF 204 1851 Oct 8 To be transferred A[rchibald] B[arclay]".

² A.12/13. This letter in a clerk's writing was signed by E. Colville. It bears the note made in red ink by Archibald Barclay: "Recd. Nov 10/51".

³ A.6/29, fos. 61d.-62d.

advance of three months pay was made to him in accordance with your instructions, and a receipt taken for the same.

3. I am happy to say that I have succeeded in completing the arrangement with the Presbyterians on the terms I formerly mentioned, and to the satisfaction, as far as I know, of all parties connected. Mr. Black, in pursuance of my instructions, has forwarded a proper description of the land attached to the Upper Church, so that it may be formally conveyed to the Bishop of Rupert's Land. The Presbyterian Minister, expected from Canada, has not made his appearance, but as he was in correspondence with the Postmaster at St. Peters, it is thought that he may yet come on this Autumn. The Scotch Settlers have collected about £600 and have already built a house for him on the lot of land at the Frog Plain that I made over to the Trustees of the Presbyterian community.

4. I returned to this place on 9th August, and found that the tranquillity of the Settlement had been undisturbed during my absence. There had been an unusual amount of rain during the summer, and the harvest will in consequence be late. I do not think, however, that the crops have suffered at all, though, should an early frost set in, the consequences may be serious. I trust, however, that we may be favored with a continuance of the present fine weather for a fortnight; in which case I think we shall have about an average harvest.

5. We learn by letters received from the plain hunters, that there has been much trouble between the Sioux and the Red River half Breeds. Fourteen of the former and one of the latter are said to have been killed. The hunters entrenched themselves behind their carts, and were attacked by the Sioux for two successive days, but ultimately repulsed them. The accounts of their success in obtaining a good supply of plain provisions are somewhat contradictory, but it appears that animals were plentiful, though their operations were impeded by the constant expectation of their camp being attacked by the Sioux; which rendered it necessary for half the party to remain in camp, while the remainder went in pursuit of the buffalo.

6. I found on my arrival at Norway House that Mr. Black

had succeeded in engaging the crews of three boats for the conveyance of supplies to McKenzie River in accordance with the wishes of the Lords of the Admiralty.¹ These boats were placed under the charge of Chief Trader Anderson,² who is appointed to that District & I received a letter from him dated "Cross Lake Saskatchewan River" 15th July in which he states that he is making slow progress owing to the inefficiency of the crews. At the late season at which they were engaged it was not to be expected that very good men could be procured, though I am inclined to think that had Mr. Black offered a higher rate of wages he might have engaged better hands, but I have every confidence in the energy of Mr. Anderson, and feel convinced that he will spare no pains to carry out his instructions. Should any thing of this kind be contemplated next season, I have to request that I may receive instructions on the subject in the course of the Winter in order that we may make the necessary preparations.

7. The American Government have appointed a Custom House Officer for this frontier, who will reside for the present with Mr. Kittson, the American Trader at Pembina. I had an opportunity last week of making his acquaintance and learn from him that on manufactured goods including Indian shoes &c, made here, the duty will be 30 P cent ad valorem, and on furs coming from this side of the line there is a duty of 10 p cent. Taking into consideration the extent of the frontier, I do not suppose that this appointment will check to any extent the illicit traffic in furs, yet the effect so far as it goes will be advantageous to us; and the contrast of the amount of duty

¹ A.13/5, W. A. B. Hamilton to the Governor and Committee dated Admiralty, April 16, 1851, "... I am commanded by their Lordships [the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty] to acquaint you that they wish a supply of the necessary stores and Provisions to be kept up at your several Posts and settlements in the different Rivers, and on the shores of the Polar Sea, sufficient for the necessities of any parties arriving on those shores or Rivers, from the Arctic Searching Expeditions". Colville was informed of this request in a letter from Barclay dated April 18, 1851 (A.6/29, fo. 69). For a brief statement on the various expeditions searching for Sir John Franklin, see *H.B.S.*, XVI, lxii.

² Chief Trader James Anderson (a), elder brother of Chief Trader Alexander Caulfield Anderson (see p. 149).

levied at Pembina and in this settlement ought to strike the inhabitants of Red River. I am also given to understand that a mail is established from St. Paul's to Pembina, to run every two months throughout the year. Should this prove correct I suppose I shall hear from you occasionally by that route, and think letters intended for Red River, should be addressed to the care of the Postmaster at St. Pauls and prepaid in England, if possible; or should you be unable to do that, they might be forwarded to Messrs. Maitland & Co. New York with instructions to prepay them to Pembina.

8. I yesterday handed to Mr. Fisher¹ his Commission as Chief Trader & beg to enclose herewith the Covenant duly executed.

9. Since I commenced writing this letter I have received despatches from McKenzie River. I learn from Mr. Bell² that the trade shews a considerable improvement over last Outfit, the increase being chiefly in Martens. The returns amount to £14,443 shewing an augmentation of £4000 over those of last year. I regret to state that this year a case of starvation has again occurred by which one of the Company's servants named Peter Ashbourne³ has lost his life. It appears that Mr. Pambrun,⁴ who was in charge of Frances Lake, having reason to apprehend that his supply of provisions would fall short, despatched the said Ashbourne & another man⁵ to find their way to Fort Halkett, and that on the road Ashbourne fell lame, & the other man was compelled to leave him in the encampment, since which time he has never been seen or heard of. I am in hopes that this season Mr. Campbell⁶ may

¹ Henry Fisher. See Introduction, p. lxi.

² Chief Trader John Bell. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, III, 427-8.

³ Listed as Pierre Ashburne dit Lambert in B.239/1/21. According to B.239/g/90 Ashburne or Ashbourne was a native and was employed in the Mackenzie River District as a middleman.

⁴ Pierre Chrysologue Pambrun, junior. See *H.B.S.*, XVI, 126.

⁵ This man has not been identified. The Fort Frances and Fort Halkett records for outfit 1850-51 are missing from the Company's archives and the Fort Simpson records are incomplete.

⁶ Robert Campbell, who was appointed a Chief Trader as from December 3, 1851. For an account of his journey in the summer of 1851 from Fort Selkirk

have explored the route from Fort Selkirk to the Youcon, & that we may be enabled to abandon the post of Frances Lake,¹ as in that case the outfit for this establishment may be sent in by the way of Peel's River & the Youcon. It appears that this year part of the Fort Selkirk Outfit which was deposited under lock & key in the "Half way House" was stolen by some strange Indians, who broke open the house and abstracted 13 pieces of goods leaving a small quantity of furs by way of repayment. This will, I fear, have an injurious effect on the returns of Mr. Campbell's post, and seems to render it the more desirable that this dangerous and inconvenient route be abandoned as soon as possible.

10. I enclose for the information of the Governor & Committee a copy of Chief Trader Rae's general letter dated Fort Confidence 17th April² by which it will appear that he had, with his accustomed zeal & activity made all the requisite preparations for his exploring expedition this summer.

11. By the same opportunity I had the satisfaction of hearing from Chief Trader Anderson that he was well advanced on his voyage to Portage La Loche, having on 7th August passed Rapid River, which is nearly half way between Cumberland House & Isle a la Crosse. The water in the Loche River was said to be in good order, and as Mr. Bell had in accordance with my instructions left one of the McKenzie River Boats on the North end of Portage La Loche, I have little doubt that Mr. Anderson will be able, notwithstanding the difficulties he has met with from the insufficiency of his crews to succeed in conveying the provisions and supplies safely to Fort Simpson.

(situated at the "Forks of the Lewes and Pelly") down the Pelly River to Fort Yukon, and from thence to Fort Simpson by way of La Pierre's House and Peel River Post (Fort McPherson), see p. 118, and Kirk and Parnell, "Campbell of the Yukon", pp. 23-4.

¹ This "Half way House" was closed during the winter of 1848-49 and the trade was transferred to the post at Pelly Banks. The latter post was burnt to the ground in November 1849 and was not re-established. Instead, Frances Lake Post was re-opened in the summer of 1850. It was finally closed in the summer of 1851.

² See *H.B.S.*, XVI, 155-8.

12. I beg now to forward the Indent¹ for Lower Red River District, Outfit 1853, for Shipment from London 1852 amounting to £5477. 9. 8d Stg.; say five thousand Four hundred and seventy seven pounds, nine shillings, and eight pence Sterling. This indent has been calculated on the principle of keeping a reserve of all staple goods, such as blankets, ammunition, tobacco, twines &c. on hand, and I trust that Their Honors will be pleased to comply with the same in full.

13. I beg to add a Memorandum regarding the contents of some of the packages of goods shipped last year (1850) as part of Red River Indent to which I have to beg your attention.

I am, Sir

Your Obedient Servt.

E. COLVILE

Memorandum regarding Importation of Goods for Red River
under mark ⁵⁰
RR

Bale No. 1315. of this Bale, part of the Invoice contents is as follows vt.

2 pcs pink Flannel ea	40 = 80 yds @ 2/1 =	£8. 6. 8
2 „ cherry Do. „	46 = 92 „ 2/2 =	9. 19. 4
2 „ fancy cold.		
checkd. Do. „	42 & 31 = 73 „ „ =	7. 18. 2 £26. 4. 2

But the following were found to be the actual contents of the Package vt.

1 pce pink Flannel	40 yds @ 2/1	4. 3. 4
1 „ cherry Do.	46 „ 2/2	4. 19. 8
1 „ check Do.	42 „ „	4. 11. 0 £13. 14. 0
Difference (deficiency) in value		£12. 10. 2

E. C.

¹This is not attached to Colville's letter. A copy of the Indent marked "Triplicate", dated Fort Garry, Red River Settlement, August 25, 1851, and signed by Chief Trader John Black is in B. 235/2/1. The Indent was "allowed in full" (A.6/29, fo. 123d.).

Lower Fort Garry 8 *Sept.* 1851¹

Archd. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House
London

SIR

Referring you to my letter of 27 ulto. which is forwarded herewith, I have now the pleasure to inform you that the canoe from York Factory arrived at this place yesterday, bringing us the welcome intelligence that the *Prince of Wales*² came to an anchor in 5 Fathom Hole on 13 August, and was to take her departure as soon after the arrival of the Portage la Loche boats, with the returns of the McKenzie River Districts, as possible. As these boats passed Norway House downwards on 18 ulto. I have no doubt that the *Prince of Wales* will have quick despatch.

By this opportunity I have received your communications of 16 and 26 June,³ with the various enclosures therein referred to. At this late period of the season I am unwilling to detain the canoe a single hour unnecessarily, so that I will defer replying to your letters till the next opportunity.

Before concluding I may mention that we have experienced a spell of very fine weather, which has ripened the grain, and that we have now no fear that there will be an ample supply of breadstuffs throughout the settlement. The plain provisions will I fear be scanty.

I am, Sir,
Yours very truly,
E. COLVILLE

¹ A.12/13. The letter is addressed on the back page: "A. Barclay Esq Hudson's Bay House Fenchurch Street London" and bears the following postmarks: (black, circular), "Sault Ste Marie C.W Oct 10 1851"; (red, circular), "Orillia C.W Oc 19 1851"; (red, circular), Montreal L.C Oc 24 1851"; and one illegible red, circular mark. The signature "E Colville" appears near the address and the letter bears a small square red wax seal marked "E C". The amount of 1s. 2d. shown in ink above the address apparently represents the cost of postage. The letter bears a note made by Archibald Barclay in red ink: "Recd Nov 10/51".

² See *H.B.S.*, XVI, 288, n. 2.

³ See p. 72. A.6/29, fos. 88-89d., contains copies of letters dated June 23 and 26, 1851. There is no copy letter dated June 16, 1851.

Lower Fort Garry 15 *Sept.* 1851¹

Archd. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House
London

MY DEAR SIR

By the express canoe to Canada I had merely time to acknowledge the receipt of your communications of 23 & 26 June as I was unwilling at that advanced period of the season to detain the canoe here. I understand that Mr. Ramsay² the Governor of Minesota Territory is expected here shortly, and I will therefore have a letter in readiness for him, as I am uncertain how long his stay with us may be. I hope to obtain from him full particulars as to the postal communication between Pembina and St. Peters, which has lately been established by the American Government.

It is unnecessary for me to enter on the subject of the claims preferred by Captain Foss for compensation as I communicated my views on the subject in my letter to you dated 4 June.

I have communicated the correspondence with the War Office respecting the case of Warice³ the Pensioner to Major Caldwell, who has, I have no doubt, informed the man of the decision come to in his case.

¹ A.12/13. "Recd. Nov 3/51" has been inserted in red ink in Barclay's writing at the top of the letter.

² Alexander Ramsey. See Introduction, p. xxii.

³ See p. 45, n. 1. Joseph Warrice, formerly a private in the 7th Regiment of Foot. He came to Red River with the second draft of pensioners in 1850. See Martin, *Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures*, p. 204. Warrice after being informed by "the Authorities" in Red River that he would be deprived of his land, residence "and every other benefit enjoyed by the Pensioners of the Hudsons Bay force" on the expiry of his Army pension in May 1852, petitioned John Brocklehurst, Member of Parliament, by letter dated November 26, 1850, to use his influence to have the pension made permanent. Without the pension, Warrice claimed that he, his sick wife and infant child, had no hope in "a land where there is little or no wages" (A.13/5, fo. 81). By a letter dated May 7, 1851, Sir John Henry Pelly was informed that the Secretary at War was of the opinion that Warrice ought to be allowed to retain his house and land on the expiry of the pension and so be prevented from "falling into a state of destitution

I note your desire that no farther advances be made on account of the Estate of the late Thomas Simpson,¹ and of Mr. James McMillan.²

I shall take the earliest opportunity of making the Resolutions of the Board relative to the rate of Interest³ to be allowed in future on the balances left in the Company's hands known to the parties interested. I gather from these resolutions, that it is not intended that any deposits shall for the future be at call, but that it will in all cases be necessary for parties to give twelve months notice previous to withdrawal of any thing beyond the amount accruing in any one year.

20 Septr.

As there seems to be some doubt whether Governor Ramsay, who is at present engaged in making a treaty with the Saulteux for the purchase of the lands at Pembina, will be able to pay us a visit, I propose to send this letter up to that place, and should he come here I shall again address you on the subject of the postal communication by St Paul's, of the arrangements of which I have as yet no reliable information.

I, this day, sent on an express from Chief Factor Rae⁴ to Sir and becoming a burden to the Colony" (*ibid.*, fo. 74). Colville was informed by a letter from Barclay dated June 23, 1851, that the Governor and Committee had "acceded to the view of the Secretary at War, the case however to be considered an exceptional one, and not to be drawn into a precedent" (A.6/29, fo. 88d.).

¹ See p. 46. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, III, 455-6.

² Retired Chief Factor James McMillan. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, III, 450-1.

³ A.1/67, p. 113, At a Committee held in London on June 18, 1851, "... Resolved ... that from the 1st June 1851, no higher rate of Interest than 3 p. cent be allowed on any money left in the Company's hands, except in the case of those parties who have deposited money at 4 per cent but have not had the benefit of two years Interest, which parties shall be allowed 4 per cent for two years from the date of their deposits; and that from the 1st June 1851 the condition on which the Company consent to hold the balances of Commissioned Gentlemen at Interest be that no Commissioned Gentleman shall withdraw a larger portion of his balance than the amount of profits and interest placed to his credit during the year ending on the 31st May preceding such withdrawal without giving twelve months notice".

⁴ This must refer to Rae's letter to Simpson dated "Provision Station, Kendall River 10th June 1851". See *H.B.S.*, XVI, 180-91.

George Simpson, together with a few lines to your address. We learn, with regret, that he has met with no trace of the missing navigators, although he appears to have fallen in with several parties of Esquimaux.

I take this opportunity of forwarding duplicate of Indent¹ for this District, Outfit 1853, Shipment 1852—of which the original was transmitted viâ Canada—I have to request that the same may be complied with in full.

I regret much to state that Chief Trader Black met with rather a serious accident last week. On his return from Manitobah, an outpost attached to this District, his horse fell, and Mr. Black fractured his collar bone. He had to ride for ten hours after his accident, before arriving at the Upper Fort, but, as he is free from fever, I hope in about a fortnight he will be on his legs again.

The grain, throughout the settlement, is now cut down and a considerable portion of it housed. The weather has been exceedingly favorable, and the harvest will I think be at least an average one. The returns of plain provisions, owing chiefly to the disturbances with the Sioux, will be exceedingly scanty. We have secured an ample supply for the wants of this district, but I fear there will be little or nothing for exportation. I shall however, lay in a good stock of beef and pork, in case of any deficiency in the supply from the Saskatchewan.

We understand that a Presbyterian Minister, (Revd. John Black² late of Montreal) has arrived at Pembina, and is expected here daily, to assume the charge of the Presbyterian congregation. The Scotch settlers appear well pleased that after thirty years striving they have at length attained their object. We have every expectation of passing a tranquil winter, as I think the settlement has been seldom freer from excitement of any kind.

I remain, My dear Sir,
Very truly Yours
E. COLVILE

¹ This is not attached to Colville's letter. See p. 70, n. 1.

² See Introduction, p. cx.

Lower Fort Garry 20 *Sept* 1851¹

Archd Barclay Esqr.
London

DEAR SIR

I have this instant received a packet from Chief Factor Rae,² which, at his request, I forward without delay. I will therefore, merely say that all here is quiet, and that I shall have an opportunity of addressing you by the way of this States during the course of the week, so that I will not detain the express to write any letters at present.

I remain, Dear Sir,
Very truly Yours
E. COLVILLE

Lower Fort Garry 25 *Sept* 1851³

Archd. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House
London

MY DEAR SIR

Referring you to my letter of 15 inst. which, contrary to my expectation, I was able to forward by the Expedition

¹ A.12/13. This letter is addressed: "A. Barclay Esqr Hudson's Bay House Fenchurch Street London". It bears the following circular postmarks: (black), "Fort Snelling Oct 14" and "5"; (red), "Y W 3 No 3 1851". The small, octagonal red wax seal used to fasten the letter bears the impression of two birds on a pedestal and the motto L'AMITIE. Barclay noted in red ink that the letter was "Recd Nov 3/51".

² This "packet" has not been identified. Although Colville's letter of September 20 was read at the London Committee held on November 5 (A.1/67, p. 146), no mention was made of the packet sent by Rae.

³ A.12/13. The letter is addressed: "Archd. Barclay Esqr Hudson's Bay House Fenchurch Street London" and bears the following circular postmarks: (in red), "Saint Paul Min. Ter. Oct 30"; (in red), "IN 23 No 23 1851"; and in black "5". The figures "24" have been added in black ink near the black postmark. The letter was fastened by a small, square, red wax seal bearing the impression "E C". The note in red ink "Recd. Nov 23/51" was inserted at the beginning of the letter by Archibald Barclay.

express to St Peters I now take advantage of Governor Ramsay's departure to address you shortly on the affairs of the country.

The boats of York Factory with the outfit for this District are daily arriving, and, as they have experienced unusually favourable weather on their trip up, the goods will, I think, be delivered in good order.

Captn. Hill¹ arrived here on the evening of the 23rd inst. and I yesterday drove with him to the Upper Fort, where he reported himself to Major Caldwell, and assumed his duty as Staff Officer of the Pensioners. He appears well satisfied with the arrangements made for him, and will, I trust, prove serviceable in maintaining good order and discipline among the Pensioners.

I, this day, received letters from Chief Trader James Anderson, dated Portage la Loche 27 August, and I have much pleasure in bringing under the notice of the Governor and Committee, the judgment and discretion evinced by that gentleman, in conducting the boats loaded with supplies for the Arctic Searching Expeditions. I have already explained that from unavoidable circumstances his crews were exceedingly inefficient, yet he has succeeded in reaching Portage la Loche in good season, and has been able, in consequence of the precautions adopted, to send back all the men engaged in this service to Red River, by which much expense and inconvenience will be avoided. He states that the supply of provisions for the Boat's crews from Red River, though only calculated to last them to Isle a la Crosse has been sufficient for the entire trip to Portage la Loche, and also for their return to Cumberland House, so that the lading of Pemican and flour, (with the exception of two bags of the latter consumed by the crews, and one taken by Captn. Pullen,) ² has been rendered at Portage la

¹ See Introduction, p. cvi. D.5/30, A. Barclay to Sir George Simpson, dated London, May 23, 1851, "... the Gov. & Comte have received an intimation [from the Secretary at War] to provide a passage to Y Factory for Lieut. Hill late of the 2nd W. India Regt. and his family. Lieut. Hill will be recommissioned with local rank of Captn. to succeed Capt. Foss ...".

² W. J. S. Pullen. For references to Pullen's expeditions in search of Sir John Franklin's party, see *H.B.S.*, XVI, *passim*.

Loche intact. It will be necessary, however, to expend a portion of the cargo on the journey to Fort Simpson, but on the whole, I trust it will be considered that I have been tolerably successful in effecting the wishes of the Lords of the Admiralty, and I feel that it is to Mr. Anderson's exertions that I am mainly indebted for carrying out the arrangements I proposed. He expected to leave the Portage on the 1st or 2nd inst. so that I have little doubt he will reach Fort Simpson in good time.

Governor Ramsay and party arrived at the Upper Fort Garry on 23rd inst. and every attention in our power has been shewn to him. He reports that he has succeeded in making a treaty with the Saulteux or Chippewa Indians, by which they surrender their rights to the American Government to the land for 30 miles on each side of Red River from Pembina to the Sioux Country, in consideration of receiving \$30,000 on the ratification of the treaty by the Senate, and an annuity of \$10,000 for, as I understand, twenty years. Should this information be correct it will be necessary to increase our outfit at the post of Pembina, as I have little doubt that a profitable business may be carried on there. Several half breeds were induced by Mr. Belcourt to abandon their farms in this settlement, and take up their abode within the American territory in the neighbourhood of Pembina,¹ being informed by him that they would come in for a share of the money paid by the American Government to the Indians; but, they have been informed, to their grievous disappointment, that so far from coming in for a share of the spoils, they will be expected, as any other citizen, to pay for the lands they occupy.

As I can get no very definite information as to the date of the mail leaving St Pauls, I have requested Governor Ramsay to get the postmaster at that place to endorse on the back of this letter the requisite information. Letters coming by this route should be directed as under

E. Colville Esqr.

Fort Garry, Red River Settlement
care of the Postmaster, St. Pauls
Minnesota Territory U. S.

¹ See Introduction, pp. lxxxi, cix.

and had better be sent through Messrs Maitland and Company N. Y. with instructions to prepay them.

I remain, My dear Sir,
Very truly Yours
E. COLVILE

Lower Fort Garry 17 *December* 1851¹

Archd. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House
London

MY DEAR SIR

I last had this pleasure on 25 Septr., and I now take the opportunity of Count de la Guiche's departure to address you on the affairs of the Northern Department.

That Gentleman returned from his hunting expedition in the Rocky Mountains on 1st Ult., and although he did not meet with the success he expected, he appears well satisfied with the reception he met with at the different establishments through the Country.² He has been remaining here awaiting the time when the winter travelling may be pronounced good, and will proceed forthwith to St. Peters with dogs.

The Settlement was visited, shortly before the snow fell, by a very general epidemic, (influenza, I believe) which carried off a few aged people, but since the winter set in has been very healthy, and quite free from excitement. I remark a decided change for the better in the conduct of the pensioners since the arrival of Captain Hill, who seems to be a very good Officer, and keeps them steadily at work on the days which they are bound to give to the public works. I am also happy to say, that with his assistance we have succeeded in getting the whole of them out of the fort, where, from their careless habits, they

¹ A.12/13. This letter, signed "E Colvile", is in a clerk's writing. The remark: "Recd. March 1/52" has been inserted at the beginning in red ink by Barclay. The duplicate of the above letter was received by Barclay on March 17, 1852.

² See p. 249.

kept us in constant dread of fire. Such of them, as have not settled upon allotments, are living in some buildings that were formerly occupied by Captain Cary,¹ where they can do no harm. One of the force, by name Stevens,² died this Autumn of consumption. Captain Hill requested to be allowed to take his seat at the Company's Mess table, offering to pay his quota of the expenses. After some demur I consented to allow him to do so, as a matter of favor, until the decision of the Committee on the question could be obtained. I told him that it was not customary to make any charge for the hospitalities of the Company's establishments and that it would not be done in his case. I beg to recommend that this favor be granted to him, so long as it is not found inconvenient, but I think he should be made distinctly to understand that should his presence at the Mess table be found inconvenient, he must at once retire. He appears, however, so anxious to accomodate himself to the circumstances of the country, and to keep on good terms with the Company's Officers, that I do not anticipate this necessity.³

It appears that Major Coldwell has received instructions to dispose of the Military stores that were left in the charge of the Company's representatives at this place, and was directed to give the refusal of the same to the Company. We have

¹ George Marcus Cary, an Irishman who went to Red River in 1836 to take charge of the Company's experimental farm. He retired to the Settlement in 1841.

² William Stevens, formerly a private in the 98th Regiment of Foot. He came to Red River with the first draft of pensioners in 1848. See Martin, *Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures*, p. 203.

³ D.5/34, A. W. Buchanan to Sir G. Simpson, dated Fort Garry, September 29, 1852, Private, "... Captain Hill ... I think is the cause of much of the discontent there may be among the men [Pensioners]; he breaks out occasionally very violently against the Company, and at times seemed inclined to make himself disagreeable. As I found this to be the case, and as there were objections from others, after waiting till the letters from London by the ship arrived, by which a reply was expected to an application made to the Co. at home as to whether Captain Hill was to be allowed to mess at the Co's table, and this reply not having been received, I considered it better, to prevent more disagreeable consequences, that he should have his own establishment and table and made provision for him accordingly. He now lives in his own quarters".

accordingly agreed to take over on account of the fur trade all those articles which would be profitably disposed of either in the Sale shops in the settlement, or generally throughout the Country. As we have not actually taken over those Stores, I am unable by this opportunity to furnish a detailed statement thereof, but I annex the principal Articles

Blankets	say 2000	equal to our $2\frac{1}{2}$ point.
Sheets	„ 1200	to be converted into bags
Rugs	„ 800	
Palliasses	„ 400	
Tin Camp Kettles	200	

By the next opportunity a detailed statement with prices will be transmitted, and a Bill @ 60 d/st. will be granted to Major Caldwell, which will not exceed £2000—Sterling—These stores will be obtained at a reasonable price, the cost being somewhat below what they could be got for in London. And I considered it very desirable that they should not fall into the hands of the petty traders, and thereby come into competition with our own importation.

I am unable at this early period of the season to give you any definite information with respect to the prospects of the trade. I learn from Count de la Guiche that Buffalo were numerous in the Saskatchewan District, so that I trust we shall be amply supplied with voyaging provisions for the ensuing season. I have as yet received no communications from other districts with respect to the prospects of the fur trade; but I fear that the rabbits are still far from numerous, so that we cannot expect much augmentation in the number of lynx. We have received a larger number of Wolves and Foxes both here and at the Upper Fort, than at this period last year, and I think the establishment of the American Custom House, where a duty of ten per cent is levied on furs, will have a beneficial effect on our returns.

I beg to enclose a memorandum¹ I have received from Mr. C. T. Pelly the Accountant at this place, relative to some

¹ The original memorandum has not been traced. A copy, dated December 15, 1851, is in B.235/21.

enquiries made by Mrs. Mills¹ as to the freight charged against her at York Factory, both for her voyage from England & from York to Red River, I never received any very definite information beyond the mere fact of a free passage being granted to this lady and her two daughters to York Factory as appears from paragraph 38 of the general Despatch.² I have accordingly requested Mr. Pelly to allow the matter to stand over in our books here, until I hear from you the wishes of the Committee on the subject.³

The Bishop of Ruperts Land has requested me to inform the Governor and Committee of his desire that the allowances made for a Missionary at Moose Factory, be applied to the establishment of a Missionary at York Factory, as he has obtained from private sources, a donation, to be applied to the purpose of a Mission at the former place. The nature of the country around York Factory precludes the possibility of collecting any large body of Indians there without incurring

¹ A.6/29, fo. 62d., Barclay to Colvile dated London, April 11, 1851, "... Mrs. Mills, and her two daughters, very accomplished women, as the Committee are given to understand, go out on the invitation of the Bishop of Ruperts Land, to establish a School for young ladies in the Settlement". The elder daughter, Mary, was so ill on arrival at York Factory that she returned to England in the same season (1851). See D.7/1, fo. 167d., and MacLeod, *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*, pp. 260, 262.

² A.6/29, fo. 56-56d., Governor and Committee to Eden Colvile dated London, April 9, 1851, "Application has been made to us by the Church Missionary Society for a passage in one of the Companys ships of this season for the Revd. Mr. Hillyer, a Church Missionary, and for a Lady and her two daughters, who have been invited by the Bishop to open a school for young ladies at Red River Settlement, which we have granted. The Ladies are represented to us as highly qualified for the important office they are about to undertake, and we hope they will prove an acquisition to the Settlement".

³ A.6/29, fo. 175, Barclay to Colvile, dated London, April 16, 1852, "... Mrs. Mills is labouring under a great mistake in supposing that she and her daughters were to be conveyed free of charge. In her own case, the charge of £8, which is usually made on account of the ship, was remitted, but the Misses Mills were to pay the full passage money. Each of these ladies had stowage to the extent of one ton, any excess to be paid for at the ordinary rate ... Miss [Mary] Mills goes out this season by the York ship, and is to pay the full passage for herself and £8 for a servant who accompanies her".

great risk of starvation, yet there can be no doubt that the natives in that vicinity, are a more docile people and more likely to become christianized than the Saulteaux, and looking at the number of officers and servants at the Factory it may be considered desirable to have a clergyman at that place.¹ Should the Governor and Committee be of that opinion I beg most earnestly to impress upon them, the expediency of sending out a single man, and one willing to continue so, for the accomodation at York Factory is necessarily so limited, & the climate is so miserable, that it is not to be expected that an English female would be contented with her residence.²

As the Count de la Guiche has made his arrangements to depart for St. Peters on the same day as that appointed for the departure of the usual express by Sault de Ste. Marie I shall send a duplicate hereof by the latter route. I hope to have another opportunity of addressing you in the course of the winter, as Mr. C. F. Rae proposes to proceed to England by the way of St. Peters, as soon as he returns from his Arctic Expedition.

I remain, My dear Sir
Yours truly
E. COLVILLE

¹ A.6/29, fo. 167, Governor and Committee to Eden Colville and Council of the Northern Department, dated London, April 7, 1852, "... we have no objection ... Such clergymen would be considered one of the Company's chaplains, and a single man is decidedly to be preferred on many accounts. A Catechist was sent out to Moose last summer by the Church Missionary Society, and this year the Revd. Mr. Watkins, a clergyman in priests orders, goes out to take charge of the Mission at that place".

² See MacLeod, *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*, for comments on life at York Factory from 1840-51. Mrs. Wills, the English wife of Dr. Wills (see p. 163), also lived there from 1849-52 and is referred to in the *Letters* by Mrs. Hargrave.

Private

Lower Fort Garry 18 *December* 1851¹

Sir J. H. Pelly Bart.
Hudson's Bay House

My DEAR SIR

I beg to enclose for your information copy of a correspondence I have had with his Lordship, the Bishop of Rupert's Land on the subject of the burial ground attached to the Upper Church, the right to burial in which, notwithstanding all that the Bishop says on the subject, I still hold was considered to be reserved to the Scotch settlers, by myself, by them, and as far as I can learn, by every body in the settlement, who took the slightest interest in the matter. I feel very strong interest in your decision on this question, not only because I feel that the Presbyterians who are one party to the bargain, will have a right to consider that, assuming me to have known the Bishop's intention of consecrating the ground, I had suppressed the truth in dealing with them; but also because I am convinced that the Bishops course will seriously affect the peace of the settlement. These people made use of this spot as a place of interment, four or five years before there was either church or clergyman of any denomination in Red River. There is not a family among them that has not a relative interred therein, and I have reason to know that no pecuniary compensation would induce them to give up the rights, which, in the arrangement with the Bishop, for the peaceable withdrawal of their claims they were distinctly assured by myself were reserved to them: and I certainly think I was warranted in making this assurance, as I read the letter over to the Bishop, before I handed it to Mr. Ross, and asked him, if I had rightly understood from him, that to this reservation he had no objection. To which he replied "certainly one can have no objection to that". Now, notwithstanding what his Lordship states in his letter to me dated 26 Novr. I can most confidently assert, that he never said a word to me about consecrating the ground, or implied that he assented to the

¹ A.12/13.

condition in any other way than the literal meaning of the words. The first time I ever heard of such intention was after the bargain had been completed, the lot of land transferred to the trustees of the Presbyterian congregation, and the money placed to their credit.

I am at a loss to conceive what His Lordship means by "a Church but no Churchyard, a Cathedral but not a foot of ground around it". When he requested me to negotiate with these people, he certainly did not appear to contemplate the using of the present church for any length of time, inas much as it was considered that it was to be valued merely as old materials, and seeing that there are upwards of 300 acres of land in the church lots, I can see no difficulty in selecting another site for the cathedral with as much land around it as he pleases.

Nor can I admit that we are putting a cemetery open to all denominations of Christians at his Lordship's gate; on the contrary he placed his gate alongside the cemetery. For upwards of 35 years interments have taken place in this unconsecrated ground, in some instances with the full service of the Church of England, in some with only a portion thereof; sometimes the service has been read by laymen, sometimes by clergymen, and in some instances again no service at all has been used, according to the views or prejudices, if you please of the friends of the deceased. It was in fact an unfortunate thing for the Bishop's peace of mind, that he ever took up his residence in the neighbourhood of the Upper Church, where his presence has increased the strong Presbyterian feeling of the majority of the congregation that formerly worshipped therein. Had he remained down here, he would have had a respectable stone church ready built to his hand, and a united congregation.

Be this, however, as it may, I do respectfully but earnestly beg that you will be pleased to insert in the conveyance a clause reserving the right of burial in their own manner and in the existing churchyard to the Presbyterians which will be I consider nothing but following out the arrangement I made with them, with the knowledge and

consent of the Bishop, and of which accordingly he will have no right to complain.

Should this not be done, and should his Lordship carry out his intention to consecrate the ground, my belief is that the Scotch settlers will continue to bury their dead therein, according to their own forms, and as in this question no moral influence will prevent them, the Bishop can only do so by the application of physical force; and this will lead to a feud between the Scotch settlers on the one hand and the Orkney half breeds who have generally adhered to the Church of England on the other, the consequences of which it is difficult to foretell.¹

Referring you to my letter to Mr. Secretary Barclay on all matters of interest connected with the business of the country

I remain, with much respect

Yours very truly

E. COLVILE

Copy of correspondence on subject of Upper Church Burial Ground²

Fort Garry 21st Novr. 1851

The Rt. Revd. the Lord Bishop
of Rupert's Land

MY LORD

I have received a letter from Mr. Alexr. Ross,³ by which

¹ A.6/29, fo. 166d., Governor and Committee to Colvile and the Council of the Northern Department, dated London, April 7, 1852, "32. We had hoped that the arrangement with the Presbyterians had been finally and satisfactorily concluded, but we regret to find that misunderstanding has arisen in regard to the Burial Ground, and under these circumstances we are not prepared to take any steps which would place it out of our controul. We cannot anticipate that this will lead to any inconvenience, for as the Church is in so dilapidated a state as to require to be rebuilt forthwith, it will be an easy matter either to enlarge the present Church-yard and consecrate the new part, or to build a church on a new site with a Churchyard attached to it".

² The enclosures are in a clerk's writing.

³ See his *Red River Settlement*, pp. 359-60.

it appears that a report has got abroad that it is your Lordship's intention to consecrate the burial ground attached to the Upper Church, the right to burial in which was reserved to the Presbyterian Settlers. Mr. Ross has requested me to ascertain from you whether the consecration of the ground will interfere with those rights; under these circumstances and looking at the part I have taken in the negotiations between your Lordship and the Presbyterians I trust that you will not consider me intrusive in requesting a reply to the following questions.

1. Is it your Lordship's intention to consecrate the said burying ground after you have received the conveyance from the Governor and Committee.

2. Should such be the case would you consider yourself justified in allowing Presbyterians or others to bury their dead therein without reading the burial service of the Church of England.

Waiting your reply to these two questions

I am &c &c

(signed) E. COLVILE

The Red River, Ruperts Land
Novr. 21st 1851

Eden Colvile Esqr.,
Govr. of Rupert's Land

MY DEAR SIR

I have done all in my power to obviate the difficulties connected with the Upper Church, but I fear it will yet be a long time before all will be settled.

Regarding the pews I have met the Presbyterians more than half way with a view to an amicable settlement. When in possession of the pews & the conveyance of the Governor and Committee, it is certainly my intention to consecrate the Church and Churchyard, as they must be used perhaps for several years until the erection of a new Church.

After consecration it will be impossible to allow of any interments except with the full service of the Church of England. All that I have ever said to yourself and others on the subject was this, that until consecration all possible liberty would be conceded in regard to their Burials; after consecration I have always said that it would be impossible.

I understood from Mr. Ross that they regarded the 150£ from the Hon. Company, as in lieu of the ground. The Ground without the Churchyard I do not Value, and should refuse the Conveyance of the Governor and Committee, unless it is distinctly understood that it conveys the whole unreservedly to me.

If they have received 150£ in lieu of the Ground & also a site & if they now receive what is certainly a fair & equitable value for their pews, it is surely with them to prepare a Churchyard around their Building on the Frog Plain.

Any other questions on the subject I shall be glad to answer to the utmost of my power. I write in haste not wishing to keep your messenger waiting.

I am, My dear Sir

Yours very truly

(signed) DAVID RUPERT'S LAND

Lower Fort Garry 22nd Novr. 1851

The Right Reverend

The Lord Bishop of Rupert's Land

MY LORD

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday, by which I regret to learn that it is your Lordship's intention to consecrate the burial ground attached to the Upper Church, and that, when that ceremony is performed, it will be impossible to allow any interments therein except with the full service of the Church of England. You further state that you have ever said to myself and others that until consecration all possible liberty would be conceded in regard to burials, but

that after consecration it would be impossible. On this point I must respectfully beg leave to differ from your Lordship. On referring to my letter to Mr. Alexander Ross written on 28th October 1850 I find the following.

- “ The propositions I have to make are as under. 1. That
 “ the present Church, which is manifestly in such a state of
 “ dilapidation as to render it necessary that it should be rebuilt
 “ forthwith should be valued by arbitration or otherwise as old
 “ material, and a proportionate amount be paid to each
 “ seceder from the congregation.
 “ 2. *That the right to burial in the existing Churchyard be*
 “ *reserved.* With these two propositions the Bishop of Ruperts
 “ Land has expressed his entire concurrence.
 “ 3. That a grant of the Frog Plain shall be made to Trustees
 “ for the congregation for the purpose of a site for church &c.
 “ 4. That at the next meeting of the Council of the Northern
 “ Department I shall recommend a grant of £150 towards
 “ building the Church.

It will probably be in your Lordship's recollection that I read this letter over to you before handing it to Mr. Ross; and on this basis the negotiation was, after some delay ultimately completed. Now I can most positively assert that at that interview there was not a single word said as to the consecration of the burial ground, and my understanding of your assent to proposition No. 2 was that you would be willing to allow the Presbyterians to bury their dead therein according to their own forms. Had I thought otherwise it would clearly have been my duty to have informed Mr. Ross of your intention.

By your Lordship's letter you appear to consider that the grant of £150 and a site is all that the Presbyterians have a right to expect in lieu of their claims to the Upper Church Land; but I think, on looking to the extract of my letter, you will be of opinion that the reserve of the right of burial is as much a part of the consideration for which they gave up their claims, as either the grant of land or the money.

You further state that it surely rests with them to prepare a Churchyard around their building on the Frog Plain. I am not acquainted with the intentions of the Presbyterian

congregation on this or any other subject, but I would submit to your Lordship that this is not a question of fencing in a few acres of land for a burying ground, but one in which the natural feelings of mankind to be buried alongside their forefathers and kindred most materially enter. This I have reason to think is the cause of the reservation made by these people in surrendering their claims to the Upper Church land; a reservation to which you distinctly stated to me at the time you had no objection. If now by an act of your own, namely consecrating the ground, you prevent these people from burying their dead according to their own forms, will it not in some degree savour of a breach of contract?

It is far from my wish to dictate to your Lordship, but I trust I may without offence suggest the propriety of leaving the present burial ground as a cemetery open to all denominations of christians, and of enclosing a new burial ground to be devoted to members of our Church. It appears to me, if I rightly understand your plans, that as you propose to use the present church until the new one be erected, that that edifice must be constructed on another site, and the new church and Churchyard might be consecrated together. I assume that it is not essential that in the interval the burying ground should be consecrated, as I am told that the St. Andrew's Churchyard, where no difficulty exists, is still unconsecrated.

Should your Lordship take this course I do hope that this long vexed question, which is I believe older than either you or I will be at last settled. There were but four conditions to the bargain. Nos. 3 & 4 are already complied with, and No. 1 by your Lordship's letter, appears to be in a fair way towards an amicable settlement; so that the sole difficulty now existing appears to be the right of burial, which I must hold, was as distinctly reserved in the arrangement as the other three.

I have written at some length, and perhaps you may think too strongly, but I feel as strongly as I have written not only because I think the peace of the community may be jeopardised by your preventing these people from burying their dead in their own way, but also because I consider, that, should you do so, without a protest on my part, they would have a right to

accuse me of deceiving them, and inducing them to give up their claims for considerations, which are not fulfilled.

I have the honor to be

My Lord

Your Obedient Servant

(signed) E. COLVILE

The Red River, Rupert's Land

Novr. 26th 1851

To Eden Colvile Esqr.

Govr. of Rupert's Land

SIR

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd which only reached me yesterday. I am sorry that my determination about the churchyard should be viewed by you as a departure from any previous agreement. With all deference I cannot regard it at all in that light but if you feel that it compromises yourself in any way, I am ready to bear a portion of the blame.

I remember two interviews on the subject of the Presbyterian question last October on the former occasion you said that you had told them that you could not interfere regarding the burial ground, as that must rest entirely with myself. I am only sorry that you should not have adhered to that course throughout, as the matter seems decidedly an Ecclesiastical one.

I am bound to confess that you shewed me the correspondence with Mr. Ross, and I had no objection to accept the terms of the Second Proposition, but I only feel bound by it in the sense in which I distinctly and positively affirm that I always explained it to yourself, to Mr. Robt. McBeath more than once, and to many others repeatedly since. By reserved right I never contemplated any rights beyond those, which they then possessed. I thought that the fear of the Presbyterians was that they would be necessarily excluded from the Churchyard.

I wished them to feel that every right possessed by them would be reserved, that as they then were, so would they continue. They might still be buried there, if they so wished it: but how? Exactly as before by one of my Clergy: up to the time of the consecration with the liberty & licence, which had been granted them for many years. Mr. Cochran was then the Offg. Minister of the Upper Church: as he had buried, so would he continue to do. After consecration the possibility of such liberty would cease: of that you were well aware, & of it they could scarcely be ignorant. This I said continually both to yourself and others. As to their burying in the Churchyard with a Minister of their own, it never entered into my mind, nor did I dream of it. I have certainly no power to concede any demand of the kind.

It is not the custom in England or Scotland for Presbyterians to bury in Episcopalian Churchyards in any other way. That it is an Episcopalian Churchyard is as clear as that the Church is an Episcopalian one. It has been used by Clergymen of the Church of England for many years, and the vast majority of the 447 interred in it have no sympathy with the objectors.

I do not, Sir, interfere with what the R Catholic Bishop does above, nor have I any wish to interfere with any services which may take place at Frog Plain, and I only claim the same liberty here. My coming out here was on a mere delusion, if I can have a Church but no Churchyard—a Cathedral but not a foot of ground around it, & that on the very spot of which the Governor and Committee said to me on leaving England “ You will find the Upper Church ready to consecrate on your arrival ”. The conveyance of the Committee is a mere empty letter, and I shall decline to accept it, if it has any such limitations annexed to it. It is certainly strange if I can consecrate St. Andrew’s Churchyard (the only delay in it hitherto having been from the wall not being yet completed) if I can consecrate the Middle Churchyard as I hope to do in Summer, & if in the case of my own Church this is to be impossible.

I did once think of a different site, but the very feelings, to which you refer, endearing the spot to those of our own

Communion as well as to others led me to give up the idea. To a general Cemetery for all denominations at my very gate, I entertain decided objections. My hope is to build on or near the present site, so as to include the Churchyard enlarged it may be beyond its present dimensions.

I am perfectly sure that there is not one Bishop who could have been found, willing to make the concessions which I have made through this unhappy affair for the sake of peace, I cannot imagine that peace would be promoted by the course which you propose: it would only perpetuate strife, and hand it down as a legacy to my successors. A Bill is to be proposed tomorrow on the subject of Presbyterian marriages, and to that I willingly agree. If then they are now to baptize & marry in separation from us, why should they wish to return for the purpose of Burial.

You speak of the feelings natural to all—of those I am not insensible: but I think it natural also where we worship: and if they have left our communion it is surely with them to prepare a spot where they may bury after their own method without the interruption of peace and harmony here.

You seem apprehensive of the consequences of my conduct; on this head I have little to fear, as I am sure that the deep feeling of the community is with me & that which I claim is only right & justice. I trust that after this temporary excitement has died away the good feelings of the objectors will lead them to regard it in the same light.

Believe me, Sir

Yours very faithfully

(signed) DAVID RUPERT'S LAND

Lower Fort Garry 5th Decr. 1851

The Rt. Revd. The
Lord Bishop of Ruperts Land

MY LORD

I have deferred answering your letter of 26th Ulto. as I wished to refresh my memory by referring to some memoranda

I had preserved on our conversations on the claims of the Presbyterian community to the Upper Church lot, and having done so I can confidently assert that the first occasion, on which I heard anything of your intention to consecrate the Churchyard was on the 19 May last, four days after the arrangement with these people was completed.

It appears to me, however, that it is useless to prolong this correspondence, and the only course left me is to lay the whole matter before the Governor & Committee, & leave it to Their Honors to act in the matter as they may think fit.

I am, My Lord &c &c
(signed) E. COLVILLE

The Red River *Decr.* 26th 1851¹

To

Sir John Henry Pelly Bart.
Governor of the H.H.B.Co
& the Committee

MY DEAR SIR JOHN

I am sorry to have still to trouble yourself & the Committee on this long agitated question of the Presbyterian claims. The accompanying Address on my own part & that of the Clergy of the Red River will fully explain our feelings at the present moment.

I had thought that all was amicably settled by the payment of the Sum for the pews: the renewal of the Claim after the liberality of the H.H.B.Co, after their possession of a site for the Church seems to me very unreasonable. If ultimately conceded, it will lead to my leaving this part of the Settlement, & fixing my residence in the vicinity of St. Andrew's Church.

¹ This enclosure is the original letter signed by the Bishop of Rupert's Land. It is endorsed in Sir John Pelly's writing: "E Colville Dec 18/51 & Bishop Ruperts Land". The Bishop's letter and memorial (see p. 94) were apparently attached to Colville's letter of December 18, 1851, when the matter came up for consideration by the Committee, but from the remarks on p. 121 it will be seen that Colville had not seen it before it was sent to London.

I believe that they will bury practically near their own Church—a few may from predilection prefer this spot where their relatives lie, if so it seems no hardship that they should be buried, as all have been interred for thirty years. I see them continually at Funerals—last week at that of Dr. Todd,¹ the greater part of them were present in Church.

Apart from this question, the Settlement has been very quiet for the last six months. I still feel my position insecure & involving very peculiar difficulty for the want of sufficient legal advice on the spot. I am very confident that the interests of the Hon. Company, as well as those of the Church of England are much compromised by the retention of the present Legal adviser. He has been throughout the avowed supporter of the Presbyterian party, although on my arrival in the Country, he urged me very strongly to make the purchase of this Property on the ground that the Presbyterians had not a foot to stand on.

My wish has been throughout that the Presbyterian Minister shall have full power to baptise, marry & bury in his own communion, and I have done all in my power to facilitate such arrangements. But I see not why, with a Building of their own on Frog Plain, they should still perpetuate a claim to be connected for ever with this Church & Churchyard.

Trusting that the Committee may view the subject in a favorable light, & by their decision put an end to a claim, which will I am sure, only serve to prolong the contention for ever.

I am, my dear Sir John,
Your faithfl. Obnt. Servant
DAVID RUPERT'S LAND

To the Honorable the Governor and
The Committee of the Honble
The Hudson Bay Company,
The Petition of the Bishop of Rupert's Land
And the Clergy.²

Understanding that the question of the Burial Ground of

¹ Chief Trader William Todd. See p. 25.

² This is the original petition in the writing of the Bishop of Rupert's Land.

the Upper Church is about to be referred home for ultimate decision, we beg respectfully to approach your Honors, and to express our firm conviction that the Churchyard is as inalienably the property of the Church of England as the Upper Church itself.

Four Hundred and Forty Seven, visited in health and in sickness by the Clergy of our Church, lie there interred—awaiting the resurrection morn. By Clergy of our Church they were consigned to the House appointed to all living.

A portion of the Congregation of the Upper Church has lately seceded—they have received a definite Sum as remuneration for their Property possessed in the Church, and yet they still put in a further claim for the Churchyard. They ground this on the previous understanding, that the right of burial was to be reserved to them.

We hold that the right to bury, if anxious to do so in the Churchyard, will be still reserved to them; the right to bury after their own method we can never concede. We imagined that most would prefer to be buried in immediate proximity to the building, where they worship God, and not in a spot adjoining a Church whose services they have left. But should the feeling which binds man to the ashes of his forefathers lead any to prefer the spot where their relatives lie, their rights will be held inviolate—there is no exclusion because they have adopted the Presbyterian Faith—by the side of the Parents may the Children lie, and the Clergy of the same Church, which committed the Father to the grave, will perform the same office for the Child.

Any attempt to bury in the Churchyard by a Minister of another Communion, we shall regard as an infringement of our rights—allowed to us by the Hon Company during thirty years, and not surely diminished by the erection of Rupert's Land into a Diocesan See. We only claim the same freedom, which the Roman Catholic enjoys, and which we are willing to concede to the Presbyterian, but we see not why interference should be exercised in the case of the Church of England alone.

We would only add our humble prayer that God our Heavenly Father for His dear Son's sake would vouchsafe to

guide and bless you in the government of the mighty land committed to your care, to His own glory and the good of immortal Souls

DAVID RUPERT'S LAND
WM. COCHRAN Senr. Missionary
JOHN CHAPMAN Chap. H.H.B.C.
W. H. TAYLOR¹ Minister of St. James's
C. HILLYER,² Missionary, Red River

The Red River
Decr. 13th 1851.

Lower Fort Garry 29 *Decr. 1851*³

Archd. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House
London

MY DEAR SIR

Referring you to my letter of 18 [17] inst. which will accompany this, I have now to inform you that on the morning of 22 inst. Chief Trader William Todd departed this life at his residence in this settlement. Count de la Guiche having put off his departure till 31 inst. enables me to communicate this information.

¹ Hargrave, *Red River*, p. 117, "... St James [Parish] extends from the upper extremity of the cathedral parish of St. John, at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, for seven miles west along the latter stream. A church was built for the use of this portion of the colony in 1850, and the Rev. William Henry Taylor, of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, continued incumbent from the date of its foundation till 1867."

² The Reverend Charles Hillyer was sent to Red River by the Church Missionary Society in 1851. He sailed in the Company's ship *Prince of Wales* and left York Factory for Red River on August 30, 1851. See A.6/29, fo. 56, C.1/839, and B.239/a/179.

³ This letter is addressed on the back page: "Archd. Barclay Esqr Hudson's Bay House Fenchurch Street London", and bears the circular, red, postmark: "Saint Paul Min. Ter. 26 Jan". The letter was fastened with a small, circular, red wax seal bearing the initials "J B". The note in red ink "Recd. March 1/52" appears in Barclay's writing at the beginning of the letter.

No other event of importance has occurred since I closed my letter to you. We have received information from the outpost of Manitobah lately, by which we learn with pleasure that the trade in that quarter is better than last year, and that there is but little illicit traffic going on there this season.

I remain,

Yours very truly,
E. COLVILLE

Lower Fort Garry 28th Jany. 1852¹

Archd. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House
London

MY DEAR SIR

Referring you to my letters of 18th and 29th Ult. per favor of Count de la Guiche I have now the pleasure of informing you that Dr. Rae arrived here on 11th inst. As that gentleman proposes to proceed direct to London it will be unnecessary for me to dilate on his expedition in search of Sir John Franklin. I will merely mention, in case of accidents that he has traced about 500 miles of new coast, has established the identity of Victoria and Wollasten Lands, and that the only trace of the missing navigators that he discovered, was a stanchion, and part of a flag staff washed on shore on Victoria Land, parts of which he has brought with him. The whole party have returned in perfect health, and I feel sure that Dr. Rae has done all in his power to carry out his instructions.

By this opportunity I have received advices from the various districts through which Dr. Rae passed, say Athabasca, Isle a la Crosse, Saskatchewan and Swan River, and I have

¹ This letter is in a clerk's writing, but is signed by Colville. It is addressed on the back page: "Archd. Barclay Esqr. Hudson's Bay House Fenchurch Street London", and bears the red, circular, postmark: "Saint Paul Min. Ter. 16 Feb.". It was fastened with the square, red wax seal, bearing the initials "E C". At the beginning of the letter the note "Recd. March 20/52" has been inserted in red ink by Barclay.

much gratification in stating that the prospects of the trade are more encouraging than they were last year, and that I have no casualty of any kind to report.

In McKenzie's River District Rabbits were again making their appearance, and Martens were said to be very numerous. I have much pleasure in informing you that Mr. Campbell has established the identity of the Pelly and Youcon, having descended the River from Fort Selkirk¹ to the latter post in about three days. The navigation is remarkably easy, there not being a single portage in the whole distance, and he thinks that loaded craft can ascend to Fort Selkirk in about fourteen days. He has this year taken in his Outfit by the way of Peel's River and the Youcon, and the post of Frances Lake, and the dangerous navigation of the West Branch, which has proved of late years so disastrous is I trust finally abandoned.²

From Isle a la Crosse I have nothing very interesting. Mr. Chief Factor Nicol Finlayson³ does not appear very sanguine as to the prospects of the trade, owing to many of the Chipewyans having taken to the plains from the difficulty they find in living in the thick woods during the present scarcity of rabbits.

My advices from Edmonton only come down to 27th Sept. at which date it was of course impossible to say anything as to the prospects of trade. The craft from York Factory were only just arrived having made one of the longest passages on record owing to the constant rains they experienced in ascending the Saskatchewan, and the unusual height of the water in that River. Mr. C. F. Ballenden proposed leaving with the Columbia party on 30th Sept.

At Fort Pelly on 27th Decr. the trade under the able management of C. T. Buchanan⁴ promised well, and plain provisions were abundant.

¹ See p. 68, n. 6.

² See p. 69, n. 1, and p. 118.

³ For a biography see *H.B.S.*, III, 438-40.

⁴ Chief Trader Alexander Wilson Buchanan, who was born in Edinburgh about 1814 and entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1839. He was promoted to the rank of Chief Trader in 1850 and retired in 1854.

On 18th instant the packet arrived from Norway House bringing letters from that place up to 3 Jany. from Oxford House 6 Decr., and from the Factory to 1st December. At all these places everything appears to be going on with due regularity and I think there is every prospect of better returns than last year.

I have much satisfaction in stating that nothing has occurred since I wrote last to disturb the tranquillity of the Settlement. The holidays passed over quietly, and I have really nothing of interest to communicate. Another Mail has come across the plains, but I received no letters from any quarter by that opportunity. I was much pleased to learn that the Bishop of Rupert's Land had received a letter from a private friend announcing the safe arrival of the *Prince of Wales* in England. As far as I can judge at present, I am of opinion that the returns from the Outposts of this district, say Manitobah Beaver Creek & Pembina will considerably exceed those of last year particularly in foxes Martens, Fishers & Musquash. Of lynx the number will be even smaller than last year ; but as rabbits seem to be on the increase in the North we may look for a return of them in this neighbourhood, in which case the lynx will again become numerous.

I remain

Yours very truly

E. COLVILLE

Lower Fort Garry 2nd March 1852¹

Archd. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House
London

SIR

In compliance with the request contained in your letter

¹ A.12/13. This letter, signed by Colville, is in a clerk's writing. The enclosures are also in a clerk's writing. At the beginning of the letter "R R 1852" has been inserted in pencil, as well as the note: "Recd. May 25/52", made in red ink by Barclay. A duplicate was "Recd. Aug 2/52", according to a note made on it in red ink by Barclay. He also noted on the duplicate in pencil: "Origl read May 26 [at a meeting of the Committee]".

dated London 5th Decr. 1851¹ I have the honor to submit for the information of the Governor and Committee of the Honble. Hudson's Bay Company the following report on the statements of George Anderson and Andrew Connell² Fort Garry Enrolled Pensioners

and remain

Your obedient Servant

E. COLVILE

Report on George Anderson's Statement.³

1. I was permitted a free passage for myself and family previous my leaving England, but instead of that I was compelled to work during the voyage & from York Factory to Fort Garry had to work more than any slave for upwards of a month.

1. The boats sent down to York Factory for the conveyance of the Pensioners, their Families and baggage were manned by full crews, say seven men and a steersman, paid by the Company at the usual rate of wages for the voyage between York Factory & Fort Garry. Such crews would have been fully competent for the navigation of the boats, even had they been loaded with 75 pieces of merchandise of 100 lbs. each. The Ship arrived at York Factory at an unusually early date, and the season

¹ A.6/29, fo. 123d., "The Governor and Committee have been in correspondence with the War Office . . . respecting George Anderson and Andrew Connell, pensioners, on whose statements you are requested to report". The Governor and Committee's correspondence on the subject is to be found in A.8/15 and A.13/5.

² George Anderson was formerly a private in the Newfoundland Companies and came to Red River with the first draft of pensioners in 1848. Andrew Connell came with the second draft in 1850. He was formerly a private in the 87th Regiment of Foot. See Martin, *Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures*, pp. 203-4.

³ This report was prepared from memoranda supplied by Chief Trader John Black on February 27, 1852 (D.7/1, fos. 227-32).

was a very favorable one, so that the crews stood in no need of any assistance from the Pensioners to enable them to accomplish the voyage in good time; but the Pensioners were informed by their own Officers, that if they did assist in the tracking of the boats up the current and the conveyance of their baggage across the portages, it would be for their own advantage in enabling them the earlier to reach their destination, and thereby entitle themselves to be the sooner put upon their stipulated pay from the Company, which was not to begin till the date of their arrival at Fort Garry. Further, at the request of the Officers of the corps, an allowance of spirits was issued *gratis* by the Hudson's Bay Company at York Factory for the use of the men coming up, at the rate of two drams a day per man, and this indulgence was, by Major Caldwell's desire granted only to those men who were able and willing to assist in the navigation of the boats; so that it appears to have been well understood by all parties, that as regarded remuneration for the Pensioners' assistance, the issuing or the withholding of this gratuity of spirits, was to be the only distinction made between those who worked, and those who did not. Considering the utter inexperience of the Pensioners in the method of voyaging in this country I am of opinion that two glasses of rum per diem would be an

ample remuneration for all the assistance they could render. On the whole, therefore considering, that the Company provided sufficient crews for the navigation of boats, much more heavily laden than those in question, that such of the Pensioners, as did work, did so for their own advantage, and got a sufficient remuneration for their services, I am of opinion that this claim is inadmissible.

Even supposing that the Governor and Committee should take a different view of the matter, I would remark that the claim cannot amount to more than £1. 5. at the rate of 10*d.* per day for 30 days, and from that the price of the rum issued should be deducted.¹

2. I was likewise promised a residence and land, the land I received, but no residence, unless I could call it a residence being huddled up in an old Fort, or in one or two old byres with a great number of other Pensioners and their families.

2. The quarters provided for George Anderson and the other Pensioners were those that had been occupied by Her Majesty's 6th Regiment of Infantry,² and I should think that it will be a sufficient reply to this grievance, that neither by the Officers of that Detachment nor by the Officers commanding the Pensioners was any objection ever made to the accommodation provided for them at Fort Garry, nor, in the opinion of the Hudson's Bay Company's

¹ The paragraph marked with a line in the margin has the words "to be omitted" written against it in pencil in Barclay's writing. The paragraph in question is omitted from the copy of the copy sent to the War Office on June 2, 1852, in A.8/15, pp. 34-44.

² The Sixth Regiment of Foot (now the Royal Warwickshire Regiment) was stationed in Red River from 1846-48. See Introduction, pp. xlvi, lxxi-iii.

3. The Agent of the Company refused to build us houses as all of us expected.

representative at this place, could any such objection be sustained.

3. I do not suppose that the Hudson's Bay Company were bound to satisfy all the expectations of the Pensioners, unless such expectations were founded on the arrangement made with them, and it will be therefore sufficient for me to quote from Colonel Tullock's letter to Sir J. H. Pelly under date 23rd March 1848¹ which is I suppose the interpretation by the authorities at the War Office of the conditions of the arrangements made with the Pensioners. "The Pensioners are to be provided with accommodation for themselves & families in Fort Garry or permitted, if they prefer it, to reside in houses erected by themselves". In accordance with this condition, quarters were provided in Fort Garry, but George Anderson like many others preferred to reside in a house erected by himself, and although he has not found it convenient to mention the fact, he received advances in Cash from the Hudson's Bay Company to the amount of £15 to enable him to erect a house, part of which advances still remain unpaid.

4. It is impossible for a man to superintend his little farm at a distance of 2 & in

4. Admitting the impossibility, it unfortunately happens that in George Anderson's case his little farm was somewhat less than a quarter of a mile

¹ A.13/3. Lieut.-Col. Alexander M. Tulloch was Military Superintendent at the War Office. See *D.N.B.*

some instances 3 miles from the Fort.

5. How in the name of wonder can a man fodder his cow or his bullock or look after his pigs & his poultry his vegetable garden or his grain at such a distance, or how on some desperate days in winter look after his animals when it would cost a man his life to go half a mile from his house.

from the Fort, so that he, at least, had no ground of complaint on the score of distance.

5. It is at all events satisfactory to know, that notwithstanding the many grievances alleged by George Anderson he has thriven so well in Red River Settlement, as to have a cow, a bullock, pigs & poultry, vegetable garden & grain crops and as I have already remarked, as his allotment was less than a quarter of a mile from the Fort, even if he had remained therein, which he did not, he could still have attended to his farm without risking his life. I can only say that during the two winters I have passed in Red River Settlement I have never seen any such desperate days, as to prevent a man from walking half a mile, nor do I think that the oldest inhabitant of the Colony could call such weather to mind. The only instance in my experience of loss of life from the inclemency of the weather, was the death of an unfortunate woman, wife of one of the Pensioners, who was found frozen close to her own door, having lain down on the snow when in a state of insensibility from intoxication, but should Anderson become a teetotaller I would cheerfully guarantee his escaping from such a death even should he walk a distance of ten miles every day during the winter.

6. "On commencing

6. With respect to this extract from

“ the occupancy
 “ thereof (their
 “ lands) they (the
 “ pensioners) will
 “ receive such an
 “ advance of money
 “ as may be found
 “ necessary for
 “ providing articles
 “ of furniture,
 “ working utensils,
 “ stock &c.

7. The House cost me £41. 11/- and my application for a transfer my commanding would only allow me £30 at the lowest valuation.

8. I made a claim on the Hudson's Bay Company for work done by myself and son from York Factory to Red River, but received neither satisfaction

the printed circular I would remark that it does not appear therefrom, that the advance in question is to be made by The Hudson's Bay Company, and my understanding of the condition is, that such advance is to be made “ under the Direction of their Officer ” by the Government. Notwithstanding this opinion Anderson has received advances at various times from the Company to the Amount of £15.

7. When Anderson first proposed applying for his transfer, he was informed by the Company's commercial representative, that when the time of his removal arrived, his premises would be regularly valued and paid for. We do not feel ourselves responsible for any observations that may have been made by his Officer, but I imagine, that if such an observation ever was made by Major Coldwell, he could only have named that sum, as what, in his opinion the house and premises would be worth; but he certainly could not have implied that it was to be looked upon as an official and final valuation.

8. The claim for work done from York Factory, I have already disposed of in Paragraph 1. Major Caldwell, assuming Anderson's statement to be correct, had, I have no doubt very good reasons for refusing to listen to him. The statement, that there is no one in this country to appeal to in

or reply. My Commanding would not listen to me & in fact there is no one in this country that a man can appeal to in cases of this nature.

9. To be brief the Hudson's Bay Company fulfilled none of their engagements with us but in two instances Viz: the pay and the land.

cases of this nature is simply false. The Pensioners' own Officers must surely be considered the proper parties to whom such appeals ought to be made. Mr. Chief Trader Black, the Company's commercial representative is always on the spot, and with the exception of three months in the year scarcely a week passes in which I do not myself pay a visit to Fort Garry. Any application made through the Officers of the Corps, and approved of by them is promptly taken into consideration, and if deemed reasonable, would be at once admitted, should the application, in our opinion not be reasonable, the matter would of course be referred to the proper authorities at home, by the commanding Officer. And I cannot but regret that this course was not pursued in the present instance, and that the Secretary at War had not the benefit of a report from Anderson's Officers on his character and conduct, a report which would, I think have led to a just appreciation of the credibility of his statement.

9. To a charge so general as this ; it is impossible to reply except with as general an assertion, that I believe all and more than all, has been done for the Pensioners, that the Company engaged to do. If George Anderson is of a different opinion he had better condescend to particulars and I have no doubt

of being able to give a satisfactory explanation.

Report on Andrew Connell's statement

1. On my arrival here I was to be supplied with cooking utensils &c I have received nothing of the kind.

2. but (I received) a house belonging to Sergeant Martin¹ who is sending home this year as a lunatic; this house is of very indifferent quality being built on the cheapest principle consisting of timber and mud for which I have been

1. The circular referred to by Connell does not state that the cooking utensils &c are to be supplied by the Hudson's Bay Company, nor as I have observed in Paragraph No. 6 of my report on Andersons statement, do I think that it can fairly bear that interpretation, nevertheless, although Connell has chosen wilfully to suppress the truth, it is a fact that on the 14th August 1851 Connell did receive an advance from the Company to the amount of £5 for the purposes mentioned in the margin, to be repaid by monthly stoppages of 10/-.

2. A person ignorant of the circumstances would suppose that Connell had been compelled against his own wishes to take Sergeant Martin's house, and to pay £20 for the same. So far from this it was at Connell's urgent & repeated request that the house and land were transferred to him & it was at his own proposal we agreed that he should pay off the advances made him, by monthly instalments of 10/-. As

¹ See p. 245.

put under stoppages
to the amount of £20.

Connell came out in the second detachment, and at the time of the arrival thereof the majority of those comprising the first detachment had left the Fort, and taken possession of their allotments, the accommodation provided for Connell and his comrades in Fort Garry was amply sufficient. With regard to the quality of the house, I can only say that the generality of the houses in the Settlement are built of wood, the interstices of the logs being stuffed with mud, and at any rate, if Connell did not approve of the house he was by no means compelled to purchase it.

3. When I came to the Officer in command and the Company's Agent here for Stock &c I was denied my advances.

4. I leave it to Your honourable opinion whether I am not entitled to a free passage home for myself and family to England.

3. This purely and simply false, as I have explained in Paragraph 1.

4. As I am of opinion that every condition of the arrangement with the War Office on the subject of the Pensioners has in this instance been complied with, I beg leave to express my hope that the Secretary at War will not consider Connell entitled to the free passage requested.

Before closing this report, I would beg to make a few observations on the letters of Mr. Hawes dated War

Office 11th Novr. & 14 Novr. respectively.¹

1. Payment of 10*d.*
a day for working
passage from York.

1. I have written fully on this subject in my report on George Anderson's Statement, and have given my reasons why I consider this claim inadmissible so that it is unnecessary to say more on the subject here.

2. Compensation
for House.

2. I deny that the necessity in Anderson's case, of erecting a house for himself arose either from the inadequacy of the accommodation in the Fort, which was amply sufficient or the distance of the land allotted to him. Nor has the Hudson's Bay Company through their Agents ever made Anderson any offer of compensation for the expenses he has been put to in the premises. But I will remark that in every instance that has yet occurred of the removal of a Pensioner from the Corps, we have paid them the full value, not only of their cottages, but also of all the improvements made on their land, in the way of ploughing fencing &c. In Sergeant Martins case £20 was paid as the value of his premises; and in that of James Ashford² £40 was originally advanced him by the Company for the purchase of the premises he occupied and on his departure last autumn, the portion of the debt that he had repaid was refunded to him by the Company, to

¹ A.8/15 and A.13/5. Benjamin Hawes, Member of Parliament for Kinsale and Deputy Secretary to the War Office. See *D.N.B.*

² See p. 245.

whom the premises reverted at the original price, without any deduction being made therefrom for interest, tear and wear or otherwise.

These two cases we apprehend will afford the best indications of the Company's desire to enable any Pensioner leaving the corps to realise the value of his premises. At the same time it is to be presumed that any Pensioner leaving the corps does so for his own advantage, and not at the request of the Company, and it does not appear, to me, that we are under any obligation to purchase the property of every Pensioner who may be inclined to take his departure, and reimburse him all the expenses he may, in some instances, have foolishly incurred, in establishing himself on his allotment, we shall however at all times be ready to aid the Pensioners in turning their property to the best account, and under all the circumstances we have little apprehension of any Pensioner who may leave the Colony incurring any loss on that account.

Observation on letter from Mr. Hawes
17th Novr. 1851¹

1. Repayment of
advances in produce.

1. I have already stated that the allegation of insufficient accommodation in Fort Garry is

¹ A.13/5.

untrue, but in the case of Pensioners, as with all other Settlers, we have never made any objection to receive in liquidation of their debt, any quantity of wheat at the rate of 3/6 per Bushel, inasmuch as we prefer a superfluity of grain to a superfluity of Dr. Balances, at the same time, as the advances in question were made at the request of the Pensioners themselves, and on the distinct understanding of their being repaid by monthly instalments from the men's pensions, and as the amount of this monthly stoppage was in almost every case of the man's own proposing, we trust that the arrangements may not be disturbed. In fact in some instances we might wait for years before we were reimbursed our advances did we merely take produce in repayment of the same, and considering that no interest is in any case charged for the use of the money I cannot think it would be equitable to prevent our carrying out the arrangements we have made which in no case press unduly on the Pensioners.

2. Difficulty as to a market for their produce.

2. It would be most unjust and impolitic in my opinion to put the Pensioners on a different footing from other settlers, nor do I see why the Hudson's Bay Company, more than any private individual should be compelled to buy what they do not require and can find no use for. At the same time we have hitherto been able to take all the wheat they have

been desirous to sell. Comparatively few of the Pensioners have had more grain than they require for their own consumption, but still from the crops 1850, some of the more industrious of the men, instead of being able to sell only 7 or 8 Bushels at the utmost, as represented to the Secretary at War, sold to the Hudson's Bay Company more than treble that quantity as will be seen by the annexed extract from the Accounts.

Sergeant Nowlan	25 Bushels @ 3/6		
Private McCormick	33	"	"
Doherty	18	"	"
Lelis	21	"	"
Turner	14	"	"
Oakes ¹	10	"	"

In short, winter 1850-51 we were fortunately able to buy nearly all the wheat the Settlers and Pensioners were disposed to part with, and this winter, 1851-52, we have agreed to purchase at least 15 Bushels from each, besides what they may choose to give towards the payment of their debts.

3. The Pensioners were not supplied with wood as they had a right to expect.

3. As this observation has been commented on by Mr. Secretary Barclay in his reply² to Mr. Hawes I will merely mention here that the instructions of the Governor and

¹ For these men's former regiments and dates of arrival in Red River see Martin, *Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures*, pp. 203-4.

² A.8/15, p. 20, Barclay to Hawes, November 20, 1851, "On the subject of fuel I have only to remark that the Secretary at War settled that question long ago by deciding that the Pensioners had no right to it, as will be seen by referring to the letter of Sir Laurence Sullivan to me, dated April 4, 1849. At the request however of the Secretary at War the Pensioners were supplied with fuel from the

Committee have been duly carried out, and that the Pensioners and their Staff Officers have been supplied with wood gratuitously during the first year of their residence in Red River Settlement.

4. Advance of six Months pension.

4. It does not appear from Mr. Hawes' letter by whom this advance is to be made, but I trust that Major Caldwell will be given to understand by the authorities at the War Office, that the money is to be advanced on the responsibility of the Government, and not of the Hudson's Bay Company; as I am averse to recommending that we should make any further advance to the Pensioners. In fact I think the industrious among them require no further advances, and the idle are better without them.

On the whole I consider that no Pensioner has met with treatment here, either to induce him to leave the Colony, or to make him discontented while he is here; and to shew the extent to which the Hudson's Bay Company have assisted the Pensioners in establishing themselves as Settlers I beg leave to state, that to the Pensioners of the first detachment the Company has advanced the sum of £877, and to those of the second £229 say in all £1106, of which amount upwards of £300 remains unpaid at this date. This money has been advanced without interest, and at

time of their arrival in the Colony until the following summer, when they were enabled to procure it for themselves . . .”.

some risk of loss, inasmuch as should the Pensioner die, we should have little chance of recovering the outstanding balance of his debt. Such of them as choose to be industrious and sober, are, I will venture to say, as comfortable, as persons of the same station of life in any part of the world, while the remainder have nothing but their idleness and habitual drunkenness to blame for not being equally so.

In conclusion I would venture to suggest the expediency of the Secretary at War informing the Pensioners that no complaints will be received except through their own Officers, and that those Officers be requested to communicate the same to the Company's Agents here before transmitting them. This, it appears to me, would have the effect, of checking such groundless or frivolous complaints as have been sent home by the parties I have been reporting on, and would further be an advantage to the men themselves, as then the alleged grievance and the explanation would be sent home together, and the authorities would at once determine on the propriety or otherwise of redressing the same.

E. COLVILE

Governor of Rupert's Land

Fort Garry *2nd March 1852*¹

¹ A copy of Hawes' letter to Caldwell dated War Office, September 28, 1852 (A.13/5), shows that the complaints put forward by Anderson and Connell were dismissed.

MARCH 16, 1852

115

Lower Fort Garry 16th March 1852¹

Archd. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House
London

MY DEAR SIR

1. I last addressed you on 28th Jany. per favor of Dr. Rae, and by the return of his party from St Paul I received on 14th Ult. your letter dated 5th Decr. last.² On 13th instant the usual winter packet arrived from Sault de Ste Marie, by which opportunity, however, I received no communication from Hudson's Bay House.

2. I regret much to learn that the Governor and Committee have not confirmed the 82nd Resolve of the last Council,³ but in accordance with their injunctions I shall take the necessary steps at the next meeting of the Council of the Northern Department.

3. I shall take an early opportunity of informing Chief Factor McKenzie⁴ that the request of the Council of the Northern Department, that he have an additional leave of absence cannot, in this instance, be complied with; and presume that he will be placed on the retired list on 1 June next.

¹ A.12/13. This letter is in a clerk's writing, but it bears Colville's signature. According to a note in pencil made by Barclay, it was read (i.e., at a meeting of the Governor and Committee) on May 26. A duplicate was received in London on August 2, 1852.

² A.6/29, fos. 123-4.

³ See p. 159. No reason was given to Colville in the letter of December 5, 1851 (A.6/29, fo. 123) for the refusal of the Governor and Committee to confirm the 82nd Resolve of the 1851 Council which stated: "That the 60th Standing Rule & Regulation as revised and passed by the Governor and Council of the Northern Department. Summer 1843 respecting Lands to be purchased in R.R. Settlement by retiring servants be rescinded" (B.239/k/3, p. 20). The 60th Standing Rule of 1843 read: "That servants be not permitted to settle at Red River Colony unless they become purchasers from the proprietors of the soil of at least 50 acres of Land at 7/6 p. acre: an order for the payment of which to be deposited with the Gentleman in charge at the Depot" (B.239/k/2, fo. 156d.).

⁴ Chief Factor Roderick Mackenzie (senior). For a biography see *H.B.S.*, I, 453-4.

4. I am happy to state that the tranquillity of the Settlement continues undisturbed; the harvest was good, and the people generally well off. The system of sacrificing some portion of the profit on the furs traded in the neighbourhood of the Settlement has had the effect of putting a stop, in a great measure to interference on the part of the petty traders. Those that do join in it, for the most part hunt a good deal for themselves and with very few exceptions bring their furs in to the Company's Shops here. Kittson, the American trader, has withdrawn all his posts from Lac la Pluie quarter, and Lac de Roseau. He has been absent the whole winter attending the Legislation at St. Paul; and made no advances to any of the traders, so that, as far as I can rely on the information I have received, I am inclined to think he is doing nothing in furs at all, though he will procure a good many robes,¹ as he gives a higher price for them than we can afford to do.

5. I shall have much pleasure in communicating to Mr. Chief Trader Anderson the approval by the Governor and Committee, of his conduct in carrying out their instructions respecting the conveyance of the expedition supplies. I am happy to say that I have heard of his safe arrival at Fort Simpson, with the greater part of his cargo in good order, though there was necessarily some consumption of the provisions between Portage La Loche and Fort Simpson.

6. In accordance with your request I forward herewith my report on the Statements made by Andrew Connell and George Anderson pensioners, which I hope may prove satisfactory.² Allow me to repeat here that those men have no real cause of complaint. Such of them as have chosen to be industrious are as comfortably off as man could wish to be. This man Anderson has got on very well owing in a great measure to the industry of his wife, who takes in washing but he has been, and is the most troublesome man in the force, being insolent and insubordinate to his Officers, and litigious and quarrelsome with his comrades. I sincerely trust that he

¹ I.e., buffalo robes.

² See pp. 100-114.

may avail himself of the permission he has received to leave the country, though I have considerable doubts whether he will do so. The rest of the Pensioners are I think becoming steadier, although I think we have quite as many as we require or can conveniently manage.

With respect to the claims made by Captain Foss on the Governor and Committee, as I gather from the correspondence that his claim for pay up to the date of his leaving the Settlement has been allowed, it appears useless for me to make any observations thereon. I will merely say that I should be quite willing to start from this place to St. Paul on any day in the year, and that now a mail route is opened, there will be people starting from either the one end or the other of the route every month in the year. It does not clearly appear from the correspondence whether his extraordinary claim for the produce of 100 acres of land is dropped or not, but I would remark that in general the profits derived from the cultivation of land in Red River by gentlemen farmers would not amount to any very mighty sum, and looking to the difficulty of finding a market for surplus produce, the fact of Captain Foss being fed at the Company's expense, and thereby not requiring to eat the produce of his farm, I am inclined to think the balance would, at the end of the year be on the wrong side of the books. For all his improvements on his allotment he has been fully, nay overpaid.

I have now to add a few remarks on Captain Foss' last claim, namely that an error in his account to the amount £21. 10. 11 may be rectified. After a careful examination of the books and documents at the Upper Fort I can find no trace of any receipt for £223. 9. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ granted by Captain Foss, nor can I understand how his private account can have been mixed up with the money he drew for the payment of the Pensioners. My opinion is, therefore, that unless Captain Foss had something more than his mere assertion to support this claim that it cannot be admitted.

7. I have notified to Mr. Chief Trader Black the error in the packing Account, and also your acknowledgment of the receipt of his various communications.

8. On the 21st Ultó. we received the Northern Packet bringing communications from the different districts. At the season when the greater part of those letters were written, there was nothing of very great importance to communicate and it will not be necessary for me to go into very great detail, but I may remark generally that the prospects of trade appear very promising, more so I think than last year; though I cannot write with any certainty on this point at present.

9. From McKenzie River I have advices dated Fort Simpson 30th Novr. by which I learn that Mr. Anderson arrived with Expedition supplies at that place on 2nd Octr. Mr. Campbell, in June last descended the Pelly to the Youcon post in seventy hours, and estimates the distance to be about 420 miles. He describes the current as strong, but no rapids "and water enough at that season for a steamer". He arrived at Fort Simpson on 4th Augt. with the Youcon returns and left with 54 pieces of Trading goods, ammunition and tobacco. He intends to carry a few of the most necessary pieces across from Peels River to La Pierre's House for the use of this Outfit. We may therefore consider the West Branch Route and the post at Frances Lake, which has lately been the scene of so many disasters, as definitely abandonned. The returns of Fort Selkirk now deposited at La Pierre's House amount to £545. 17. 3. The Youcon Returns in Dépôt at Fort Simpson amount to £1326. 9. 3 and those at La Pierre's House to £1336. 2. 2. The returns of Peels River deposited at Fort Simpson amount to £1408. 15/-. Mr. Anderson proposes to establish a post either at Marten Lake or at the mouth of Marten River as may be found most convenient. He reports that the district generally is well supplied with dried Provisions, and no supplies of Pemican will be required from the Saskatchewan. Rabbits were scarce, but martens were reported numerous, and on the whole I think the prospects from this district are favorable. J.Bte. Hebert dit Manuel¹ the party accused of aiding and abetting the Loucheux Indians in their massacre of the Esquimaux will be sent out by the spring Express to Fort Chipewyan, and accompany the

¹ See *H.B.S.*, XVI, 171.

Athabasca Brigade to Norway House. Neil McKay¹ the only witness against him will come out with the McKenzie River returns. I hope to receive by the Spring canoes the instructions of the Governor and Committee as to what is to be done with these men; though I am myself of opinion that there is not sufficient evidence as to render it worth while to send them to Canada.²

I learn from Mr. Anderson that the gentlemen in McKenzie River District have established a library³ therein, amounting already to several hundred volumes; and he informs me that he has been requested to petition the Company through me to allow them to get their books from England free of freight. Under proper restrictions as to quantity I think that this favor might be granted to the gentlemen in that Northern District, where the evenings are so long, and where books must become almost a necessary of life to those who have a taste for reading. 10. From Athabasca my letters are dated Vermilion 10th Decr. and Fort Chipewyan 31st Decr. at the former place I regret to learn that disease has been rife among the Indians, as many as 50 souls including 24 of the best hunters having

¹ B.239/1/22 lists Neil McKay as a fisherman in the Mackenzie River District for outfit 1851-52. George Barnston described him as "a pleasant little fellow" (D.5/34, Barnston to Simpson, August 24, 1852).

² A.6/29, fos. 169d.-170, Governor and Committee to Eden Colville and the Council of the Northern Department, dated London, April 7, 1852, "50. We have perused the evidence respecting the massacre of the Esquimaux by the Loucheux Indians, but it does not appear to be by any means sufficient to implicate the halfbreed Hebert as an accessory in that atrocious barbarity. There was undoubtedly in his behaviour on that occasion a great degree of moral culpability, but nothing, as far as can be gathered from the statements made by him and McKay (the only parties who witnessed the massacre) which the law could lay hold of. Under these circumstances it would be useless to bring this man to trial; but he is unfit to remain in the Service, and must be dismissed with as much disgrace as can be made to bear upon him".

³ The request was granted at a meeting of the Governor and Committee held on May 26, 1852 (A.1/68, p. 1). See Stanley, *In Search of the Magnetic North*, pp. 107-8, J. H. Lefroy to Mrs. A. Lefroy, dated Fort Simpson, March 29, 1844, "... Of all possible books, what would you suppose to be the very last one might meet with in this corner of the world. I think London's *Cyclopedia of Villa and Farm Architecture* is one of the last. Yet here I found it, fresh and new ...".

been carried off by the Influenza. Notwithstanding this Mr. Chief Trader Deschambeault¹ reports the prospects of trade as being tolerably favorable. A new Fort has been established at Fond du Lac on Lake Chipewyan in accordance with the 10th Resolve of the Northern Council,² with every prospect of success, upwards of 700 lbs. of dried Meat & Grease having been traded there up to 13 Decr. last while the fisheries were sufficient to keep the establishment going. Rabbits were said to be on the increase in the neighbourhood of Fort Chipewyan, and in this district generally I think the prospects are promising for a successful trade.

11. From English River District I have nothing of interest to communicate. Martens were said to be numerous, but as rabbits are scarce many of the Chipewyans have gone to the plains in search of buffalo and Mr. Chief Factor Finlayson does not seem to be very sanguine on the subject of returns.

12. From the Saskatchewan I learn that the prospects of the provision trade were tolerably good, but I have no information as to the prospect of the fur trade in that quarter. At Cumberland C. F. Lewis³ informs me that on 16 Jany. the fur returns were somewhat better than at the same period last year and rats and martens were plentiful, so that I trust that the trade in that quarter will turn out better than last year.

13. By a letter from Chief Factor Ballenden dated, Boat Encampment 31 October I learn that the Columbian party had got safely across the Mountains, though at an unusually late period of the season. I have no doubt that before this letter comes to hand you will have heard from Mr. Ballenden from Fort Vancouver so that I need say nothing farther on this point.

14. In the Settlement everything is going on so quietly that I have really little or nothing to communicate. At the last

¹ George Deschambeault. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, III, 436.

² B.239 k 3, p. 3, Minutes of Council for the Northern Department of Rupert's Land, held at York Factory, July 7-9, 1851. Resolved 10, "That Chief Trader Geo. Deschambault be instructed to establish the proposed post at Fond du Lac [Lake Athabaska, not Chipewyan] in the Course of the present Outfit".

³ John Lee Lewes. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, I, 446-7.

meeting of the General Court we had a no less serious case before us than a charge of child murder. The Grand Jury threw out the bill against Margaret Heckenberger¹ the mother of the murdered infant and the grandmother Jane Heckenberger was convicted on very clear evidence of the murder. I accordingly had to sentence her to death, but on the recommendation of the Jury Major Caldwell commuted her sentence to two years imprisonment, which she is now undergoing. With this exception we have had no serious offences to try since I have been in Red River and it is a duty which I by no means relish as my knowledge of law is unfortunately very limited, nor do I like to endanger the present happy tranquillity of the Settlement by requesting Mr. Thom to come into Court in his capacity of Clerk of the Court.

15. The Bishop of Rupert's Land, and the Presbyterians appear to be awaiting the decision of the Governor and Committee on the subject of the burying ground attached to the Upper Church very patiently. At least I have heard nothing on the subject of late. I understand that his Lordship has sent home a petition² to the Governor and Committee on the subject. I think it would have been a preferable course if he had favored me with a perusal thereof before doing so, in order that it might have been accompanied by a proper explanation on my part of the allegations contained therein. I have much pleasure in stating that Mr. Black, the Presbyterian Minister is most assiduous in his duties among his flock, and I have never once heard his name mentioned in connection with any secular affairs.

16. The School for young ladies under the management of Mrs. Mills and her daughter is going on very well. She has at present nine young ladies, and I think next summer will

¹ Chief Trader John Black in a private letter to Sir George Simpson dated Fort Garry, March 25, 1852 (D.5/32), also names the guilty parties Heckenberger, but see *H.B.S.*, XVI, 219, where Dr. Rae gives the name as Cook. Barclay (A.6/29, fo. 188) referred to the condemned woman as "the daughter of the late Willm. [Hemmings] Cook". See *H.B.S.*, III, 432-3.

² See p. 93, n. 1.

have as many as she can take. From all I see of her I think a better selection could not have been made, and I trust that she will be duly appreciated by the gentlemen in the Country.
 17. I do not anticipate another opportunity of addressing you before the beginning of June when I shall again have that pleasure.

I remain, My dear Sir
 Yours very truly
 E. COLVILE

Lower Fort Garry 18 May 1852¹

Archd. Barclay Esqr.
 Hudson's Bay House
 London

MY DEAR SIR

I understand that there is some prospect of an attempt being made to reach St Paul, but as I have some doubts of the possibility of crossing the plains in their present state, and have accordingly determined to send an express by the way of the Lakes and Canada, as soon as I hear the navigation of Lake Winnipeg is practicable, I shall not write very fully on this occasion.

I have much regret in informing you that the Settlement has been visited by a very serious calamity from the waters having risen to a height nearly equal to that attained in the disastrous year 1826. As far as I can learn, the water on that occasion only exceeded the present elevation by two feet. More than

¹ A.12/13. This letter is addressed on the back page: Archd. Barclay Esqr Hudson's Bay House Fenchurch Street London", and the remark "Pembina June 20" has been added in different writing and ink. The red, circular postmark is illegible. The letter was fastened with a small, square, red wax seal bearing the initials "E C". There is also a duplicate which apparently was contained in the packet sent by express "by way of the Lakes and Canada". On this Barclay wrote in red ink: "Recd. Aug 2/52", and in pencil "Original not come to hand".

three fourths of the population have been compelled to leave their houses, and betake themselves to the nearest ridges with their cattle and sheep. In the greater part of the settlement, there will not be a stick of fencing left, and many houses, barns & stables have been swept away. At the Upper Fort, which is on the highest ground in that vicinity the water yesterday stood ten inches on the floor of the main house, and about fourteen inches in the sale shop. Fortunately the rise has been gradual, varying from 5 to 11 inches a day, which gave us ample time to remove all the property to the upper floors, and I do not anticipate any loss whatever on the goods, produce, or returns in store, but I imagine that the buildings will incur some damage, and all the fences round the fort will be carried away. I have great hopes that the water has attained its height, or nearly so; as from 6 a.m. on 15th to 6 a.m. on 17th inst. the rise was only $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, say $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches per day, while the day before it had risen about ten inches. I sincerely trust, therefore, that I shall not be called upon to report any serious loss of the Company's property, though it is clear that the Settlement has sustained a blow, that it will not recover for years; nor can I look forward to next winter without serious apprehension. The whole of the farms from the upper lots on the Main River to within eight miles of this establishment are at this moment covered with water to the depth of several feet, and in this neighbourhood the low points, which are the best adapted to raising wheat, are also flooded, nor is there any prospect of the waters abating sufficiently soon to allow of wheat being sown. In this section every field will be sown with wheat, and I trust that we may be blessed by an abundant harvest. In the remainder of the settlement we can only hope that the waters will subside, so as to allow the settlers to sow barley and plant potatoes. We have also a good reserve of wheat on hand, say 16000 bushels, and I think the Scotch settlers will be able to secure nearly equal to a years consumption for themselves, while the more improvident Canadians and half breeds will have in a great measure to trust to the produce of the gun and the net. On the whole, though we cannot fail to have much destitution in the course of the winter, I think,

with an average season, and productive fisheries in the fall we shall not have an actual famine.

20 May. By late advices from Pembina we learn with much satisfaction that the water had fallen sixteen inches and at this place it has been now stationary for 24 hours, so that I think we may soon expect the subsidence of the waters. I regret to have one fatal casualty to report—one David Low, servant to the Bishop of Rupert's Land, who was drowned by the upsetting of his canoe. We had some difficulty in persuading the Pensioners to leave the Fort in sufficient time, but they are all encamped on a ridge about 8 miles from the Upper Fort in company with Capt'n Hill, and by the last accounts were all doing well.

Reserving all further details for my communication via Canada, which I hope to despatch about the last of the month.

I remain

Very truly Yours

E. COLVILLE

Lower Fort Garry 31st May 1852¹

Archd. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House
London

MY DEAR SIR

Referring to my letter of 18th inst. (duplicate herewith) I have now much pleasure in informing you that since that date the water has been falling rapidly, and has for some days been out of the main house at the Upper Fort, and I think by this time it will be out of the Fort altogether. I trust that in about a fortnight the majority of the settlers will be able to return to their houses, such at least, as are fortunate enough still to possess houses. I do not think that the property of the Company will have sustained any damage, with the exception of the loss of some fencing in the neighbourhood of the Fort.

¹ A.12/13. This letter is in a clerk's writing, but it was signed by Colville. Barclay noted on it in red ink that it was "Recd. Aug 2/52".

In this part of the settlement a very large quantity of wheat has been sown, & much of it is already up and looking well, and I think the Scotch Settlers will have saved all the wheat they had on hand as so far as I could perceive in passing along in a canoe none of their houses or barns had been swept away. Some of them are said to have a reserve equal to three years consumption, and all of them have sufficient to last them for a year. The greatest sufferers will be the Canadians and half breeds settled on the main River above the Upper Fort, and I think the majority of these will either have to follow the buffalo, or pass the winter at Manitobah Lake, where fish can be taken throughout the whole winter. The most serious loss to the settlers is the carrying away of all the fences, as it will be difficult for them to put in either barley or potatoes, from the fields being exposed to the intrusion of pigs and cattle and even for another season they will find it a hard matter to get their lands enclosed, as fencing stuff is only to be procured at a very considerable distance. It has been a great blow to such of the Pensioners, as had commenced farming on their allotments; and I fear they will be in a great measure disheartened. Many of them were settling down quietly, and I think were gradually becoming better subjects, as they acquired a greater stake in the country. Captain Hill has taken great pains to make himself useful; and appears to manage the corps, as well as any body could. I enclose herewith a register of the rising and falling of the water¹ as kept by Chief Factor Ross, which, though not altogether perfect, may be of interest. I think that on the whole the water rose about $18\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the winter level, and it has upto this time fallen about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet from its maximum height, and from the best information I can procure it only wants 18 inches of the height attained in 1826, but from the increase in the population, & the improved condition of the settlers, the effects will be far more disastrous than on that occasion. At Pembina the water stood at $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet in the Company's establishment, and Mr. George Setter Postmaster, has been living since 30 April in a boat, with all his trading goods on board. I believe, that,

¹ See pp. 128-30.

owing to the precautions he has taken, none of the returns, goods or provisions will have suffered from the rise of the waters.

Since I commenced writing this letter a small canoe arrived From Fort Alexander, with the packet sent via Sault Ste. Marie. Your letter is dated 12th Decr.¹ but as I have already replied on 16th April² to your letter of 5th Decr. and its enclosure, of which the duplicates came safely to hand I need not enlarge further on that subject at present. I may mention that by this same opportunity I have received London newspapers of 3rd March, and the express appears to have left Lachine on 7th March, and Sault Ste. Marie on 10th April, so that I regret much I have none of your favors of a later date to acknowledge. The account of the January Sales would have been very acceptable but for some reason or another I did not receive a single line from Sir George Simpson on this occasion. Probably he has addressed me by St. Paul, but I do not expect that we shall receive a mail from that quarter before 1st July.

Some time back I was visited by one Mr. Tanner,³ a half breed from Sault de Ste. Marie, who is an American subject, and connected with some American Missionary Society. He informed me that he was about purchasing a lot of land in the neighbourhood of the White Horse Plain, from one Edward McKay, but before doing so he had determined to call upon me to know if he could legally make such a purchase, and to enquire generally what my views on the subject were. I should mention that this Mr. Tanner speaks the Saulteaux language, as I am informed, most correctly, and is described as an eloquent preacher. To what denomination of Christian he belongs I am not very clear, but he is either American Presbyterian or Congregationalist, and he told me, his object

¹ A.6/29, fo. 125. This brief note covered duplicates of Barclay's letter of December 5 and a letter from the Deputy Governor, [Andrew Colville].

² I.e., March 16. Cf. p. 115.

³ In the "Camp-Fire Sketches", (Bond, *Minnesota and its Resources*) James Tanner is described as being about thirty-five years of age in 1851. He was a son of the John Tanner who spent many years in captivity with Indians and was later United States interpreter at Sault Ste. Marie. See James, *Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*. . . .

was to make this lot of land the head quarters of a Missionary establishment for converting the Saulteaux to Christianity, but that the instructions he had received from the Society was to do nothing in opposition to the wishes of the authorities of the country. I informed him in reply that I saw three serious objections to the scheme he proposed. 1 That a Roman Catholic Mission was already in existence at the White Horse Plain and that, for the sake of Indians, I considered the clashing of two different sects as most objectionable; besides the religious disputes between the actual population of that neighbourhood that would doubtless arise. 2 That he was an American citizen and attached to a foreign Missionary Society, and that as this was the first application from such a quarter I could not take upon myself to encourage it in any way, without consulting the Governor and Committee, and 3ly that I had a decided objection to the locality he had pitched upon, as from my experience in the country I was convinced that the less Half breeds and White people were brought into contact with the Indian converts the better, as the latter appeared to me to learn most assiduously all the bad qualities of the former, and none of the good. I concluded by telling him that I would address the Governor and Committee on the subject by the first opportunity and that in the mean time he had better return to Pembina, which he has done. I shall be glad to get the views of the Governor and Committee on this subject by the first opportunity, though I must confess, I do not see how we can dispossess Mr. Tanner, should he think fit to purchase a lot of land from one of the Settlers & conform to the laws of the country, and the conditions of the land deed.

In case of accidents I beg to enclose duplicate of my letter of 16th March covering my report on the cases of Anderson and Connell Pensioners.

I remain

Very truly Yours

E. COLVILLE

Notes on the rise and fall of the Red River at the Stone Fort
Spring 1852¹

April

Thursday	22nd	This evening the ice opposite the Stone Fort made a general move with a great crashing noise, it being thick, clear and solid as in the middle of winter, the water rose rapidly—in about an hour and a quarter the ice stopped running, the water continued to rise.
Friday	23rd	The ice still choked below and the water rising, about 11 A.M. the ice moved on for three quarters of an hour, the water rising.
Saturday	24th	The ice began to run again with great force, part of the wall of the Distillery was crushed in, the water was several feet deep in that building and the large Granary next to it.
Sunday	25th	The ice still running, and the water rising very rapidly.
Monday	26th	Ice running; towards evening the water ceased rising, the whole rise being about 14 feet.
Tuesday	27th	The water falling.
Wednesday	28th	The water falling.
Thursday	29th	The water falling.
Friday	30th	Since the 26th the water fell about 10 feet.

May

Saturday	1st	No more ice, the water on the rise again.
Sunday	2nd	Water rising.
Monday	3rd	The same.

¹ These notes bear the following remarks made by Barclay in red ink : " Recd. Aug 2—Gov C's lett. May 31/52 ". See Clark, *Notes on Red River Floods*, Appendixes 7-16, for a collection of contemporary accounts of the 1852 flood.

May 1852

Tuesday	4th	The rise of the water increasing and more so in the Upper Settlement.
Wednesday	5th	Water rising, all the low lands above the Image plain covered.
Thursday	6th	Water rising.
Friday	7th	The water rising continually at the rate of from 3 to 8 inches p 24 hours; rising much more rapidly in the Upper Settlement.
Saturday	8th	Water rising.
Sunday	9th	The water rose much during the last 24 hours.
Monday	10th	The water rose 8 inches during the last 24 hours.
Tuesday	11th	The water rose 4 inches during the last night and about 5 inches during the day.
Wednesday	12th	The water rose 5 inches during the last night, during the day the water rose $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches making a rise of $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches in the last 24 hours.
Thursday	13th	The water rose 5 inches during the last night and $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches during the day.
Friday	14th	The water rose $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches during the last night and $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches in course of the day making a rise of 13 inches in the last 24 hours.
Saturday	15th	The water rose 4 inches during the night and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in course of the day.
Sunday	16th	The water rose $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches during the night and 4 inches in course of the day.
Monday	17th	The water constantly rising last night 2 inches and during the day 4 inches.
Tuesday	18th	The water rose $\frac{1}{2}$ inch during the night and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in course of the day.
Wednesday	19th	The water rose 3 inches last night and $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in course of the day.

May 1852

Thursday	20th	The water rose $\frac{3}{4}$ inches during the last night and 4 inches in course of the day.
Friday	21st	The water seems to be at a stand, during the last night; it fell $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches during the day.
Saturday	22nd	The water fell a little more than an inch during the last 24 hours.
Sunday	23rd	The water fell 1 inch during the last night and 3 inches in course of the day.
Monday	24th	The water fell $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches during the last night and 2 inches in course of the day.
Tuesday	25th	The water fell 3 inches during the last night and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in course of the day.
Wednesday	26th	The water fell 3 inches during the last night and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in course of the day.
Thursday	27th	The water fell 3 inches last night and 2 inches during the day.
Friday	28th	The water fell 3 inches during the night and 3 inches in course of the day.
Saturday	29th	The water fell 3 inches last night

Lower Fort Garry, *May 29th* 1852Norway House 22nd June 1852¹

Archibald Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House
London

MY DEAR SIR

I beg to enclose Mr. Thomas Balfour's² letter with Mr. Rowand's³ report annexed thereto, which though somewhat of

¹ A.12/13. Barclay noted at the beginning of the letter in red ink "Recd. Sept 6/52".

² According to B.239/g/81 and C.1/935, fo. 2d., Balfour left the Company's service in 1842.

³ Chief Factor John Rowand. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, II, 240-1.

the shortest is I believe as correct as it is brief. I consider Balfour's claim to [be] quite inadmissible. The only allowance made to servants is for voyaging servants, when they perform the duties of a cook in addition to the ordinary duties of a voyageur. The cook to a gentleman in charge of a post is about the easiest berth about the establishment, and no gratuity ever has been allowed for the performance of that duty.

It is so inconsistent with usage that an engaged servant should be asked to trade horses with Indians for the use of the Company, and pay them with goods of his own, for money does not pass in the Saskatchewan, that I think the man must have been out of his senses when he made such a claim as he has done. The only foundation for such a claim that I can imagine is a rule that has from time immemorial prevailed in the Saskatchewan, that each servant should keep a horse for the purpose of bringing home meat, for which he charged £2. and on his leaving the district, and delivering up the horse, the same sum is placed to his credit; but I will venture to say that no one ever heard of an engaged servant being employed to trade horses from Indians out of his own means.

I remain

Yours very truly

E. COLVILLE

Westray, Orkney 19 Decr. 1851¹

Archibald Barclay Esquire

SIR

Having for these some years back a Claim for Outlays, on The Honourable Hudson's Bay Co. in reference to which, I made several applications to their secretary Mr. Smith;² but

¹ This letter is signed by Thomas Balfour, but has the appearance of having been written on his behalf. It is addressed on the back page: "Archibald Barclay Esquire, Secretary, Honble. Hudson's Bay Co. London", and bears a One Penny postage stamp.

² William Smith, who died on January 13, 1843. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, II, 242.

having heard some time ago of that Gentleman's death, I humbly beg to renew my application, through you, and shall give you undernoted, a rough, but true, detail of the matters that constitute my lawful & just claim:

1834.	April.	Engaged in the service of the Honble Hudson's Bay Co.	
1835.	April. ¹	At Edmond fort requested by Mr. J. Row to purchase 3 Horses for the use of the Co	
		@ £6. 6/- £6. £5. 10 ea	£17. 10. -
		2 Stand of Harness @ 10/-	1. -. -
		2 Carrying Saddles @ 5/-	10. -
		Ordered to Carleton fort, & there engaged as Cook & Waiting man to Messrs. Prudence & Small, ² with the latter of whom for 6 years, at an additional rate of wages of £3 pr. Ann. the customary thing in the Country.	18. -. -
		Requested by Mr. Small to purchase another Horse for the use of the Company, value	4. -. -
		1 Stand of Harness 10/- 1	. 15. -
		Carrying Saddle 5/-	
		Removed to Fortpit, & there engaged as cook & waiting Man to Mr. Henry Fisher 7 Months, at addl. £3 p Ann	1. 15. -
			£43. 10. -

These several Items amounting to Forty three pounds ten shillings were when incurred put to my debit in the Books

¹ At this point Barclay inserted the following note in red ink :

" 1834	Book Debts	15. 0. 5
1835	Ditto	7.17. 5
1836	Ditto	17.15. 2".

² John Peter Pruden and Patrick Small.

with a promise of being refunded at the expiry of my servitude; but as the Books will shew not the least allowance of any description was made, in consequence of which I refused to sign the Books when leaving. On my arrival at London on my way home I called on the late Mr. Smith & stated the whole affair as above, who replied, I should be honestly dealt with.

The Gentlemen above referred to, if alive, can vouch the verity of my statements. Hoping, as my claim is just & quite correct, you will have the goodness to lay the same before your Honourable House & forward to me at your earliest convenience, the result of this my application.

I remain

Sir

Your Most Obt. Hble. Sr.

THOMAS BALFOUR

Secretary to the
Honble. Hudsons Bay Co.
London ¹

Norway House 21 *July* 1852 ²

To The Governor, Deputy Governor
and Committee of the
Hon. Hudson's Bay Company
London.

HONORABLE SIRS

1. On the morning of 12 June the light canoe arrived from

¹ The following notes have been made at the end of this letter: (1) in ink in the writing of W. G. Smith, Assistant Secretary, "Home Octr 1842"; (2) in ink in John Rowand's writing, "Not a word of truth in this letter by Thomas Balfour [signed] J Rowand CF HB Coy"; and (3) in pencil against the initials "G.S.", "He can have no claim for extra wages as a servant to P. Small. An allowance is made *only to voyaging* servants of Commissioned Officers in consideration of their extra duties. The other claims appear to me much of the same character".

² A.12/13. This is a copy in a clerk's writing. It was evidently the copy sent to Sir George Simpson for it is endorsed in E. M. Hopkins' writing: "1852 Norway House 21 June Eden Colvile to Govr. Dep. Govr. & Committee H B Co.". The original letter, in a clerk's writing, but signed by Colvile was received in London on September 6, 1852 (A.12/6, fos. 130-45).

Montreal at Lower Fort Garry, by which I had the pleasure of receiving your General Despatch to the Governor & Council of the Northern Department, dated London 7 April 1852, Mr. Secretary Barclay's letter to me under date London 16 April, and the other documents as per the accompanying packet list.¹ I left Red River the following morning, and after a pleasant and expeditious passage through Lake Winipeg, arrived at this place on the afternoon of the 16th. I found the Gentlemen from the Districts of Isle a la cross, Cumberland House and Saskatchewan awaiting me here, and the following day Mr. Chief Factor Sinclair with the returns of Lac La Pluie made his appearance, so that I at once proceeded to hold the Council of the Northern Department, when I had the honor to lay before them your general Despatch together with the letter from the Board of Management and other public documents from the Columbia and elsewhere. For our proceedings in Council I beg to refer you to the Minutes, forwarded herewith,² and shall now proceed to lay before you, as succinctly as possible, the results of the trade in the different Districts during the past outfit and such other points connected with the business of the Country, as may appear worthy of your attention.

2. The only deaths among the Commissioned Officers and Clerks that have occurred during the past Outfit in the Northern Department so far as I have yet learned, is that of Chief Trader William Todd at Red River Settlement, which I reported in December last. I have heard of three casualties among the men; the blacksmith³ at York factory was killed in the course of the winter by the accidental discharge of a gun barrel—a man at Nelson River named Peter Scott⁴ who was

¹ Copies of the two letters mentioned above, the packet list and certain items mentioned therein are in A.6/29.

² The "official" copy of the minutes is in B.239/k/3, fos. 25-43.

³ According to the York Factory "Medical Journal" for outfit 1851-52 (B.239/a/180), George Louttit received a gunshot wound in the upper part of his thigh on January 8, 1852, "from an old Gun Barrel which had been incautiously placed in the fire". He died seven days later.

⁴ The fisherman at Nelson River post. He died on May 11, 1852 (B.239/g/91).

drowned by the upsetting of a canoe, and a man named James Hunter¹ killed at Fraser's Lake by the falling of a tree. The Country generally has been perfectly healthy.

3. The trade on this side of the Mountains, so far as I have learned at present, will shew a very decided improvement on that of last year. The great increase will however be in Musquash, but Martens also will shew a considerable improvement. The returns in other furs will I think be found about equal to those of last year, there being an improvement in some Districts of each description and a falling off in others —of Lynx, however, unless they should have increased in McKenzie river and Athabasca from which Districts I have, as yet, received no late accounts, the exportation from York factory will be this year I may say almost say "Nil".

4. From the Copy of the Secretary's correspondence it is evident that I can have nothing new to lay before you with regard to the affairs on the west of the Mountains still in accordance with usage, and thinking that a sketch of the year's proceedings, may be interesting I shall proceed to lay before you, as briefly as possible the result of last year's proceedings throughout the Columbia District, as I gather it from my correspondence and the accounts that arrived by the usual Spring Express.

5. We have received advices from the different sections of this District to the following dates—

Fort Vancouver	1 April
Fort Victoria	16 March
Fort Langley	10 March
New Caledonia	20 February
Thompson's River	26 March
Fort Colvile	22 April

6. The annexed Balance Sheet² shewing the Profit & Loss on the whole District exhibits a most unsatisfactory result. The loss amounting to no less a Sum than £6,754. 11. 5,

¹ A labourer from the Shetland Islands. He died on January 17, 1852, in the second year of employment with the Company (B.239/g/91).

² The balance sheet is not attached.

against a gain of £14,814. 16. 7 last year; shewing that the transactions of this year have been less profitable than those of last year to the amount of upward of £21,000. A portion of this loss may be doubtless attributed to the large sums paid the American Custom-House for duties, and in some measure perhaps to the derangement caused to the business by the vexatious proceedings on the part of the Custom-House Officer Moses in seizing the *Mary Dare* and the Steamer *Beaver*.¹ From the want of detailed accounts I find it impossible to detect the various reasons of this great falling off, but the general opinion of the gentlemen on the other side of the Mountains, who have addressed me on the subject is that it is to be attributed in a great measure to the farming operations carried on by the Fur Trade in Vancouver's Island, and the expenses incurred at Fort Rupert & elsewhere along the Coast. It is clear that the business must be carried on for the future on some different principle, or the loss in the Columbia will soon devour all the profits made in the rest of the Country.²

¹ D.7/1, fo. 288d., John Ballenden to Eden Colville, dated Fort Vancouver, Oregon Territory, March 22, 1852, "... The Port at Nisqually was opened early last season; and although the Company expected considerable advantage from the arrangement, it has this year deranged our business, and been the cause of much trouble. Early in December the Collector made use of the most frivolous pretexts to seize the Brigantine *Mary Dare* and steamer *Beaver*. The *Mary Dare* was libelled for having on board a package of refined sugar of 230 lbs. instead of 600 lbs. weight as fixed by law. The package was mentioned in the manifest, & still on board the vessel when she was seized. The *Beaver* was seized for the Captain's having permitted Mr. & Mrs. Work and family, and Miss Birnie, to land at Nisqually previously to the vessels being reported by the Master at Olympia; and for having been entered in ballast, when she had a few goods adapted for the Coasting trade on board. After considerable expense and trouble the case was brought before the courts at Olympia, the *Mary Dare* liberated on bond for \$13,000, and the seizure of the Steamer declared illegal. In the meantime a case was filed against the Captain, who rather than wait and be arrested, or grant bond to appear at next Court day, took a canoe and started with Indians for Victoria. The matter is now, I hope, before the American Government ...".

² A.6/30, fo. 81d., Governor and Committee to Sir George Simpson and the Council of the Northern Department, dated London, April 6, 1853, "Owing to the same want of detailed accounts of which Governor Colville complained, we have been unable to ascertain the causes, but we apprehend that it is in a great

7. In connection with this subject I would remark that we have three Depots within reach of one another at two of which there are very large and expensive establishments to be kept up, say Vancouver and Victoria, while at the third, Fort Langley the expenses are no doubt larger than if it remained a mere trading Post. It appears to me that some plan should be devised for consolidating the depôt business, as much as possible, and I am inclined to think that Victoria will be found on the whole the most convenient, and the business to be conducted at Fort Vancouver reduced to a sale shop for Goods of both British and American Manufacture for Cash and Gold dust. In my despatch to the Board of Management I have avoided touching upon these points, until I have an opportunity of consulting your Honors on the subject. I may here mention that we have heard with great satisfaction that it is your intention to establish the Country west of the Mountains, as a distinct Department,¹ as I have felt both last year and this

measure, if not entirely, attributed to errors in the mode of stating the accounts; we have therefore sent out Mr. John Miles, an experienced Clerk of our establishment here, to investigate the accounts of the last Outfit, and to open the Books of Outfit 1853 on a system which shall in future exhibit the state of the business in a clear and distinct manner. Mr. Miles left London on the 2nd November, and had arrived at Fort Vancouver on the 18th January."

¹ A.6/29, fo. 165d., Governor and Committee to E. Colville and the Council of the Northern Department, London, April 7, 1852, "27 . . . We find in the frequency and regularity of the communication established with the North West Coast of America all the facilities necessary . . . and we have therefore determined to form the Country West of the Rocky Mountains into a distinct and independent Department, to be called the Western Department with Fort Victoria for the principal station. As this measure however will require some preparatory arrangements to be made, it will not take effect till the 1st June 1853". A.6/30, fo. 82, Same to Simpson and the Council of the Northern Department, dated London, April 6, 1853, "8. . . . On a further consideration . . . we have judged it expedient to modify the projected measure so far as to detach the posts within the United States frontier from the Western Department, and to form them into a Department by themselves, to be called the Oregon Department. By this means the inconveniences resulting from having two principal Depots for one Department will be avoided, and should we be so fortunate as to be able to dispose of our possessory rights within the United States boundary, the Oregon Department will be extinguished without affecting in any way the business of the Western Department. 9. All the posts in the Western and Oregon Departments

considerable difficulty in writing to the Board of Management, from a feeling that any instructions I might give might possibly be opposed to instructions received direct from London by way of Panama, and possibly cause some derangement to the business.

8. Mr. Chief Factor Ballenden proposes the establishment of a chain of posts along the frontier North of the line dividing British and American Territory¹ say one on the vicinity of the Columbia Lakes—one on the Oakanagan Lake at a place called L'ance a Sable which would be in connection with our present establishment at Kamloops or Thompson's River. A horse road might be established along this line so that we would entirely avoid passing through American Territory even for the passage of our Spring Express.

9. With the exception of Fort Colville (and the greater part of the returns of this Establishment come from British Territory & would be collected at these proposed Posts) the establishments within the American Territory were all carried on at a loss, and I do not think it likely that the Furs that are traded under present circumstances in this section of the Country are likely to repay the cost of collection. The Indians have now so many other ways of providing for their wants, that they will not take the trouble of hunting fur bearing animals, and the returns from these Posts are of almost nominal value,

will be outfitted from their respective depots, namely Fort Victoria and Fort Vancouver, and the goods for the Nisqually district ought to be ordered separately, and as has been done this year shipped under the Consulate Seal of the United States, and sent in the vessel to Victoria to be forwarded from thence without being opened, and thus entered at the United States Custom House as a direct importation. 10. There will be two Boards of Management, one consisting of Messrs. Chief Factors Douglas and Work, for the Western Department, the other of Mr. Ogden (whose restored health has enabled him to return to Fort Vancouver) and Mr. D. Mactavish for the Oregon Department . . .”

¹ *Ibid.*, fos. 82d.—83, same to same, April 6, 1853, “12. . . . Were we prepared to quit the United States territory altogether, such a chain of posts as Mr. Ballenden describes would have some important advantages, but as we must not relinquish any of our posts South of Lat. 49 until we dispose of all our possessory rights there, it will be sufficient at present to explore the country along the frontier with a view to obtain better information as to its resources, and the most eligible places for establishing posts”.

as will appear from the value of the Returns at the undermentioned Posts for the two past Outfits.

	Out 1850	Out 1851
Snake Country	485. 7. 2	339. 0. 8
Fort Nez Perces	166. 5. 1	45. 14. 6
Fort Vancouver	883. 19. 9	343. 4. 4

10. Mr. Chief Factor Ballenden reports that on the land in the neighbourhood of Fort Vancouver, the harvest was very poor, not exceeding from 3 to 4 Returns. He is of opinion that while the wheat raised by the Company in that vicinity costs about \$3 per bushel, an ample supply might be obtained from the Settlers in Oregon which could be purchased for \$1 @ \$1 $\frac{1}{4}$ per bushel. It is, I think, questionable considering the uncertain state of affairs in Oregon, whether we ought to depend on the American farmers entirely for our supplies, as the discovery of a fresh gold mine or some other exciting cause might produce a sudden rise; and I myself saw Flour in Oregon selling at \$25 pr. Barrel. At the sametime it is clear that in land so exhausted by overcropping as only to yield 3 or 4 returns, farming cannot be a profitable operation.¹ The saw-mill has been for some time under repair, and when again in running order Mr. Ballenden proposes to let it on shares of the lumber sawn.

11. It appears that the business in the sale shop at Fort Vancouver is on a much smaller scale than it has been for the last two years, owing in a great measure to the excessive importations into Oregon, but partly in Mr. Ballenden's opinion to the fact of Fort Vancouver being in an isolated position, as of course it must continue to be, so long as our possessory rights are respected. The plan that Mr. Ballenden appears to recommend to obviate this disadvantage, is to

¹ Ibid., fo. 83, same to same, April 6, 1853, " 13. . . . There are two objections to this plan, both of them, of great weight. In the first place it is to be feared from the desultory habits of the Oregon farmers that a constant supply is not to be depended upon, and, secondly, that by ceasing to cultivate the ground, we might afford a handle to ill disposed persons to dispute our right to it. We therefore think it better to continue our agricultural operations for the present at least ".

increase the number of agencies establishing one in each of the numerous "cities" that are scattered through the Territory and confining the business of Fort Vancouver to a mere Depot, whence to supply these Agents with goods. I may here remark that the other Members of the Board of Management do not take this view of the matter, and Mr. Douglas appears to be averse to the system of agencies in toto. The business that has been conducted by Allan McKinlay & Co¹ though on a small scale has been exceedingly profitable, shewing a profit of 25 per cent on the Invoice of Goods, over & above commission and all other expenses. On the other hand Mr. Richard Lane² has conducted the business most shamefully, and his proceedings appear to me to savour of fraud; and the transactions with this individual are productive of considerable loss, in the shape of bad debts due by him, none of which do I see much prospect of our recovering. Under these circumstances it is clear that, should Mr. Ballenden's scheme be considered worthy of trial, the greatest precaution will be requisite on the part of the Gentleman in charge that the business be put into the hands of trustworthy parties, and that they be carefully watched and a proper check kept over all their proceedings.

12. As I am aware that you have before you all the circumstances attending the seizure of the *Mary Dare* and *Beaver* on the most frivolous pretexts, it is unnecessary for me on this occasion to enlarge on the subject. Messrs. Douglas and Work in opposition to Mr. Ballenden's opinion, have instituted proceedings in the Courts of Oregon against the Collector of Customs for the seizure of the *Beaver*, laying the damages at £2800. I confess I do not think this a very judicious proceeding, as I am apprehensive that the effect will be to put the costs of the action in the Attorney's pocket; as I have very little confidence in the impartiality of the Oregon

¹ This firm was made up of George Traill Allan, Archibald McKinlay, and Thomas Lowe, all ex-employees of the Hudson's Bay Company. For biographies see *H.B.S.*, VI, 383-4, 393 and 394-5.

² He was another ex-employee of the Company. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, VII, 314.

Courts in cases in which the Hudson's Bay Company are concerned. I trust, however, that my view of the matter may turn out erroneous, though I should have preferred seeing the whole matter left in the hands of the British Minister at Washington.

13. It appears that Mr. Ballenden, with a view of obviating the difficulties with the Custom-house for the future, has proposed to the Board of Management that the Posts of Nisqually and Fort Colville should be outfitted from Vancouver instead of Victoria, as has been the practice of late years. The Board of Management have adopted this scheme so far as regards Nisqually, and very properly in my opinion; but Mr. Douglas seems averse to doing so with regard to Fort Colville. There is much to be said on both sides. The route from Colville to the Dalles will afford great facilities and inducements for desertion which are avoided by the present arrangement of passing by Fort Hope to Langley, but in my opinion the former route will be found the cheapest, and will cause much less destruction to horses than the present Mountainous route between the Similkameen River and Fort Hope. It has this further advantage that under the present arrangement duties are charged on the Goods for Fort Colville and calculated on the value of those Goods at Fort Victoria, while if they were sent by the Columbia the duty would be only reckoned on the cost price of the Goods in London. In my despatch to the Board of Management I have expressed no opinion on this question as I wished before coming to any conclusion on the subject to have an opportunity of consulting your Honors.

14. We learn that Mr. Preston, the recently appointed Surveyor General, has shewn no hostile feeling towards the Company. He has called upon Mr. Ballenden for a plan of what we consider our possessory rights; which Mr. Ballenden was about to get prepared employing for this purpose Mr. Adolphus Lewes¹ clk., who has had some experience in surveying.

15. Mr. Ballenden requires no men from this side of the

¹ A son of Chief Factor John Lee Lewes. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, VI, 392-3.

Mountains this season, as he finds they merely come across to run away, and he hopes to be able to get on without a further supply this season.

16. From Mr. Chief Factor Douglas I have advices dated Fort Victoria 16 March. It appears that Governor Rosenberg is not well inclined to the proposed establishment at Sitka, for the Collection of Furs from the Indians inhabiting the territory leased from the Russians stating that he cannot enter into the scheme without full authority from the Directors of the Russian American Company and that even supposing that were obtained he could not erect buildings for the party to be stationed there in less than four years. His principal objection appears to be an alarm at the congregation of so many Indians in the neighbourhood of the establishment. Notwithstanding Governor Rosenberg's manifest objection to the proposed plan Mr. Douglas appears anxious that application should be made to the Directors at St. Petersburg by the Governor and Committee.

17. From copies of the correspondence transmitted it would appear that you have been so fully supplied with information regarding the work done by the shipping on the North West Coast, that I deem it unnecessary to enlarge upon that subject on this occasion, merely remarking that the seizure of the two vessels at Olympia appears to have deranged the business very considerably, and entailed considerable loss on the concern for which we hope due compensation may be obtained from the American Government.

18. It appears that Mr. C. F. Douglas has purchased an American Craft to replace the *Una*¹—the Brigantine *Orbit*, now called the *Recovery*²—on what appears to us exceedingly

¹ The brigantine *Una* was bought in London by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1849 and sailed for the Pacific North-west Coast in 1850 commanded by Charles Edward Stuart. The *Una* was wrecked on Neah Island, near Cape Flattery on December 25, 1851, and was set on fire by the natives. Her captain (William Mitchell), crew and most of her cargo were taken to Fort Vancouver in the American ship *Susan Sturges*.

² The *Orbit* was registered at Victoria as the *Recovery*. She was built in Dorchester County, Maryland, in 1845 and measured 154 47/95 tons. In 1858 the *Recovery* was chartered by the Government of British Columbia and

reasonable terms, having paid for the vessel with all her stores & apparel and a Cargo of Spars and shingles on board the sum of £520. 16. 8. She has had a thorough overhaul and the Carpenters report her quite sound, built of live oak, copper fastened to above high water mark and in good condition generally with the exception of the copper sheathing which will require renewal.

19. The operations carried on at Queen Charlottes Islands do not appear to have had a very satisfactory result, though the vein of auriferous quartz promises to be rich. Four different expeditions were fitted out from our establishments. The first under Mr. C. F. Work in a Canoe, I presume from Fort Simpson in May last year, but from the smallness of the party he was obliged to return without effecting much. The second attempt was made by Capt. McNiell C. T. in the Steamer, but from the Water being too shoal in the route they attempted he had to return to Fort Simpson on 27 June. The *Una* next proceeded from Fort Simpson on 18 July under the charge of C. F. Work and C. T. McNiell on which occasion about 60 ounces were traded from the Natives, while the blasting of the rock does not seem to have been attended with any very satisfactory result. The *Una* was again dispatched from Victoria on 6 Oct with a strong crew and eleven landsmen under C. T. McNiell. They made several blasts and traded some lumps from the Indians, when the opposition of the latter obliged them to desist. The result of this operation being that about $4\frac{3}{4}$ lbs of pure gold were collected. From Mr. Douglas' account of the matter I am inclined to think that C. T. McNiell was somewhat hasty in his departure. Had he returned to his vessel and remained some time the natives might have been conciliated and would have probably consented to allow the Work to proceed. Mr. Douglas proposed to employ the new vessel *The Recovery* on this service and I trust that the result may be profitable. There appears to be great excitement among the American population

was employed in Fraser River in the service of the Revenue. In 1859 she was sold to the Government and in the same year she was again sold to Messrs. Leonard & Green of Portland, Oregon.

on the South side of the Straits of de Fuca & Puget's Sound, and Mr. Douglas has, it appears addressed the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the subject, but I should imagine that no steps will be taken to prevent American citizens searching for Gold in Queen Charlotte's Island. The ferocity of the Natives will be more effectual, I suspect, in deterring these foreign adventurers.

20. The Steamer *Beaver*, until her seizure by the American Authorities appears to have been in constant employment. She returned to Fort Victoria after a successful trade within the Russian Territory, and to the Southward of Fort Simpson, and then proceeded to Sitka with the Contract Otters,¹ and was afterwards employed on the unsuccessful attempt to reach the gold mine. Her fur returns shew a considerable improvement over those of the past Outfit say 1851—£3349. 8. 8 against 1850 £2712. 3. 2 the increase being chiefly in Martens, Beaver and Mink, while there is a considerable decrease in the number of Bears and Foxes. The Engineer Mr. Johnstone² who replaced that exceedingly troublesome person Mr. Thorne,³ has so far conducted himself satisfactorily.

21. At Fort Simpson the trade has been much less productive

¹ Two thousand seasoned land otter skins (excluding cubs and damaged skins) taken or hunted on the west side of the Rocky Mountains. They were due to the Russian American Company on or before June 1, 1851, as the first payment of rent for the lease of the narrow coastal strip of Russian territory from the Portland Canal to Mount Fairweather. The original contract with the Russian American Company (see *H.B.S.*, VI, xi-ii, 25, 27) expired in 1850, and a new agreement to begin on June 1, 1850, was entered into on March 22 April 3, 1849. See *Alaskan Boundary Tribunal*, III, "Appendix to the Case of His Majesty's Government", pp. 213-14.

² John H. Johnson (Johnstone) was engaged by the London Committee to replace James Thorne. Johnson sailed from England for the Pacific North-west Coast in the chartered ship *Tory* in November 1850.

³ James Thorne, who was appointed engineer of the steamer *Beaver*, in September 1846, arrived at Fort Victoria in the Company's barque *Coselitz* on March 22, 1847. He was "an excellent Engineer", but had a "cross ill-grained, unbearable temper" and did "all in his power to incite and increase discontent among the people" (D.7/1, Work to Colville, dated Fort Simpson, December 18, 1850). Thorne returned to England in the *Norman Morison* in 1852.

than last year, there being a decline on every description of Fur with the exception of Beaver. This is attributed in some measure to the Steamer having collected the Stekin trade this season, whereas last year the returns from that quarter were collected at Fort Simpson. The comparative statement shews as under.

Outfit 1850	£6728. 14. 11
„ 1851	4836. 9. 3

22. At Fort Rupert, on the other hand, there is an increase in the value of the Returns, arising from the articles of Beaver, Martens, Land & Sea Otter. The Returns for the two Outfits being,

Outfit 1851	£1462. 11. 1
„ 1850	889. 14. 5

The profit arising from the fur trade at this establishment is, however, unfortunately more than counterbalanced by the loss incurred by the mining operations, there being as yet no appearance of a workable seam of coal, notwithstanding the heavy expense that has been incurred. The shaft sunk by the miners was tested with the boring Machine to an additional depth of 20 fathoms and no coal being discovered the work was abandoned. Mr. Gilmore¹ then commenced boring at the Indian Diggings 7 miles south of the Fort and had, at last accounts attained a depth of 183 feet without finding Coal. The surface Coal collected by the Indians is also, I understand quite dead stock, there being no demand for it either in Oregon or the Sandwich Islands—on the whole the affairs of Fort Rupert present rather a discouraging aspect.

23. At Fort Langley, the fur Returns shew some improvement, the value for the two past outfits being

Outfit 1851	£842. 0. 9
„ 1850	587. 6. 1

¹ Boyd Gilmore was described by Archibald Barclay as “a respectable, calm tempered man” (A.6/29, fo. 26). He was engaged in 1850 to replace John Muir (see p. 17, n. 2) and sailed from England in the chartered ship *Pekin*. Gilmore returned to England in the Company’s ship *Princess Royal* in 1855.

The increase arising chiefly from Martens. The salmon trade has however, fallen off very considerably, there having been a greater scarcity of fish in Fraser's River last season than has been known for many years; so that the salmon put up last outfit only amounts to 950 barrels, about half the quantity of the previous year. I believe, however, that the increase and decrease of Salmon is periodical in Fraser's River, and that the deficiency seldom lasts more than one year at a time so that I hope we may hear of better returns in this article next year from Fort Langley. The English labourers that were sent to this establishment for the purpose of carrying on farming operations appear to have been exceedingly troublesome, and Mr. Yale¹ returned them to Vancouver's Island as useless and unmanageable. I do not think the English labourers from their habits, and peculiar dislike to short commons or unusual food nearly so well adapted for the service of our interior Posts as Orkney men or even Highlanders, and I hope that Mr. Douglas may be able to furnish some of the former class to Mr. Yale, in order that he may raise a sufficiency of breadstuffs for the supply of the New Caledonia and other inland Brigades.

24. At Fort Victoria the fur returns shew a considerable diminution in every description of fur, the returns in each year being

Outfit 1851	£678.	0.	11
„ 1850	1294.	8.	5

At this establishment also the Salmon Fishery has also been unsuccessful, but a commencement was made, and 220 barrels put up and sent to the Sandwich Islands, where they gave great satisfaction. Mr. Douglas proposes to carry on this business on a considerable scale and I have little doubt that the operation will be profitable, as the demand for Salmon in the Islands seems never to flag, and from the fish being caught at Victoria in the salt water, they will be in all probability a good sample.

25. Mr. Douglas does not appear to consider the progress of

¹ James Murray Yale. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, I, 473-4.

the farm operations carried on at Victoria under Mr. Baillie¹ one of the bailiffs sent from England as very satisfactory, which result, however, he does not attribute to Mr. Baillie but to the idle and disorderly conduct of the labourers. The general opinion of my various correspondents on the other side of the Mountains is that it is to the farming, and other expensive operations carried on at Vancouver's Island, that the present serious loss in the Columbia District is to be attributed.²

26. Considerable improvements have taken place on the road between Thompson's river & Fort Hope, a party of 10 men under the charge of Mr. Peter Ogden Jr.³ having been employed for nearly two months in improving that part of it which passes over the Mountains between the Similkameen and Fraser's River; and the outcoming Brigades from New Caledonia and Thompson's River, were to leave the latter place on 10 June, at which time the snow on the tops of the hills is sufficiently packed to bear the loaded horses and there is a sufficiency of grass to be found in the vallies. The improvements of the road are to be continued this season and I trust it will be put into such a state as to diminish considerably the annual loss of

¹ Thomas Bayley (or Baillie) was engaged as a bailiff for the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company and, accompanied by his wife and son, sailed for Victoria in the chartered ship *Tory* in 1850. On arrival his services were transferred to the Hudson's Bay Company and he was placed in charge of the Uplands Farm ("on account of the Fur Trade") at Cadboro Bay. On the expiration of his contract in 1855 he returned to England in the *Princess Royal*.

² A.6/30, fo. 85-85d., Governor and Committee to Simpson and the Council of the Northern Department, dated London, April 6, 1853, "20. ... If it is supposed that the Fur Trade is burdened with any expences not properly belonging to it, we have only to remark that this could only arise from the accounts being improperly kept, and this will no doubt be put right by Mr. Miles who has been sent out for that purpose. As to farming operations, 3000 acres of land have been secured to the Fur Trade without cost, for the purpose of providing food for the Establishments, but if that food can be purchased cheaper than it can be raised, it will be for the Board of Management to consider whether it may not be advisable to give up cultivation, and let or sell the land".

³ Peter Ogden, junior, was a son of Chief Factor Peter Skene Ogden. He joined the Company as an apprentice in 1835 and became a Chief Trader in 1854.

horses, which has been for some years a very serious expense to the concern. Eight acres of land at Fort Hope has been sown out with Timothy seed,¹ and some scattered along the road at the different encampments.

27. Chief Trader Fraser² writes from Thompson's River under date 26 March—This river is a tributary of Fraser's River, and has suffered equally with the latter by the total failure of the Salmon, on which article the Natives depend almost entirely for their sustenance. The Indians have had to betake themselves to the Mountains in search of food, and the returns in consequence are considerably less than they otherwise would have been. Notwithstanding this drawback the value of the Returns I am happy to say is fully equal to those of last year, say Outfit 1851 £1437. 7. 10 Outfit 1850 £1418. 19. 5. Martens as is usual in seasons of scarcity, have decreased in number, 1398 having been traded in 1851 & 1813 in 1850, while in Bears, Beaver, Musquash & Otters there is a decided increase. I have much satisfaction in stating that the band of brood Mares attached to this post have done remarkably well, and the Stock consists at present of

167 Brood Mares

47 Colts 3 yrs. old

21 „ 2 „ „

91 „ 1 „ „

22 „ „ of this Spring up to the time of the departure

of the Packet, at which date of course there were many of the mares yet to foal. I go into these details because it is to this establishment that we have to look for the future, for the horses required for the Interior transport, as the price asked by the Indians at Walla Walla and the Snake Country, on which we formerly depended, is so exorbitant, that none can be profitably procured from that quarter.

¹ “Timothy grass . . . A name (originally American) for Meadow Cat's-tail Grass, *Phleum pratense*, a native British grass, introduced into cultivation under this name in the North American colonies in the eighteenth century.” (*Oxford English Dictionary*.)

² Chief Trader Paul Fraser. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, X, 249–50.

28. From New Caledonia Mr. C. T. Manson addresses me under date 20 Feby. and reports the trade to have been on the whole successful. Not a single salmon was caught, at any of the Posts on Frasers River in this District, say Alexandria Fort George Stewarts Lake and Fraser's Lake, and the consequences would have been most disastrous, had not Mr. Griffin¹ been fortunately able to supply a large quantity from the post of Babines, which with the very moderate produce raised in the small gardens attached to the Posts, enabled our people to get through the Winter I annex the comparative statement of the value of the Returns.

Outfit 1851	£4119. 10. -
„ 1850	4358. 6. 3

In Martens, however there is a considerable falling off from 4179 traded in 1850 to 3061 in 1851, while there is a corresponding increase in Beaver & castorum.

29. From Fort Colville Mr. C. T. Anderson² writes on 22 April having arrived at that place on 15 April and reports that he found the affairs of the Post, which had been intrusted during the Winter to Mr. William Sinclair Jr.,³ a very meritorius young officer, in a very satisfactory state. The returns are about equal in value to those of last year

Outfit 1851	£3006. 5. 4
„ 1850	2956. 6. 8

a decrease in Martens being compensated by an increase in Beaver & Musquash. From Mr. Anderson's letter it would appear that he intends proceeding to the Dalles and Fort Vancouver for his Outfit in accordance with an arrangement made by Mr. C. F. Ballenden, though the other Members of the Board of Management appear so decidedly opposed to the

¹ Charles John Griffin, who joined the Company as an apprentice clerk in 1846. He was promoted to the rank of Chief Trader in 1858.

² Chief Trader Alexander Caulfield Anderson, a younger brother of Chief Trader James Anderson (a). For a biography see *H.B.S.*, VI, 384-5.

³ For a biography see *H.B.S.*, VII, 320-1.

Scheme, that I have some doubt whether it will be eventually carried out.

30. I find that I have omitted in the detail of the transactions to mention the Post of Nisqually the only other Post west of the Mountains, and as I have heard nothing of Interest from that quarter, it will suffice for me to mention that the fur returns are about equal to those of last year—

Outfit 1851	£259. 19. 6
„ 1850	249. 18. 6

31. Having thus gone through the transactions of the past year of the Posts situated to the West of the Rocky Mountains I purpose now to enter into a similar detail of the state of the trade on this side, and I am happy to say that there is every appearance of increased returns from all the Posts from which I have received recent intelligence. The exportation of Musquash will be unusually large from York Factory this season, and if the same increase has taken place in Athabasca, McKenzie's River and some other Districts from which I have not as yet received the details, I am inclined to think that it will fall little short of a Million Skins. Of Martens too the number will be considerably increased, and I think every description of fur will be found more numerous than last year with the exception of Lynx and possibly Otter.

32. From McKenzie River my latest dates only reach to 30 Novr. last, & from Athabasca to 30 Decr., and as I have already in my letter to Mr. Secretary Barclay dated Red River 16 March 1852 conveyed the information contained in the letters referred to, I have nothing to report on this occasion regarding these two districts. Mr. Wm. McMurray¹ who has for some years conducted the affairs of the establishment at Great Slave Lake in a very satisfactory manner, has applied for a year's leave of absence, on urgent private business. I have replied, that in accordance with the rules of the Service such indulgence can only be given to commissioned gentlemen, and that he must retire from the service, but that I had little doubt that no difficulty would be made to his re-entering the

¹ A clerk. For several references to him see *H.B.S.*, XVI, *passim*.

Service after his business was transacted. I trust, as Mr. McMurray is a very valuable officer, your honors will be pleased to entertain favourably any application he may make for returning to the Service.

33. In English River District the trade shews an improvement as compared with last outfit, the value of the Returns being,

Outfit 1850	£3205. 11. 9
1851	3586. 10. 4
shewing an increase of	380. 18. 7

This increase, however, arises principally from the article of Musquash—48,000 having been traded this season against 19,500 last. There is also an increase in Bears & Beaver, & a falling off in Otter, Lynx & Martens.

34. In the Saskatchewan District also the fur returns shew a slight improvement, while there is a falling off in Robes & Leather, and also in the quantity of Plain provisions. I annex the comparative statement for the two past outfits

	1850	1851
Furs	£6527. 17. 8	6925. 17. 3
Robes Leather &c	3877. 17. 6	2472. 18. 6
Provisions	1843. 19. 4	1411. 6. 8
	£12249. 14. 6	£10,810. 2. 5

Here also the chief increase is in Musquash the number traded in 1851 being 52,567 and in 1850 only 9180. The number of Beaver is about the same as last year, in Bears & Minks there is a slight encrease while of the other descriptions of fur the quantity traded is somewhat lower. The falling off in the provision trade is unfortunate, as the supply from Red River of plain provisions will not much more than suffice for the wants of our outposts in that District and of Lac la Pluie. The demands made upon our resources by the different Missions throughout the Country are a heavy drag on our resources on occasions of this nature and should they continue to encrease as they have done of late years we must curtail their expenditure of pemican, or we shall be unable to carry on the business of the trade. We should have experienced serious difficulty this

season, had I not taken the precaution of laying in a good stock of Salt Beef and Pork at Red River last autumn, when I found the supply of plain provisions was likely to fall short; and by a due economy of the stock on hand I hope that we shall be able to perform the transport business of the season in a satisfactory manner.

35. In Cumberland District the Comparative Statement annexed will shew that the result of trade during the past year has been satisfactory

Outfit 1850—	£3004.	o.	8
„ 1851—	3518.	o.	8

There is a considerable increase here in Martens, say from 871 to 1388, and also in Musquash, Bears & Fishers, while the number of Beaver traded is somewhat less. Among the returns from this Post are 37 skins of the Loon or Great Northern Diver, which it is thought may be found saleable, as the breast is covered by a very fine down.¹ A considerable number of those skins might be exported, as they are numerous in all parts of the Country; should the price obtained for them be a remunerating one, we shall be glad to learn the result of this small lot, and if it turn to good account, shall give directions for trading an increased quantity throughout the Country.

36. In Upper Red River District the value of the returns is nearly double that of last year, say

Outfit 1850	£2150.	3.	—
„ 1851	£3828.	3.	11

There is an increase in every description of fur with the exception of Otter. Musquash here has increased from 6,000 to 29,000; and I think the general result is a satisfactory proof that we have made some progress in checking the success of the American Opposition in this quarter. In fact so far as I can

¹ According to A.54/213, p. 46, forty-one Loon Skins were sold at the Company's sale held in London on February 22-24, 1853. No reference to them was made in the Governor and Committee's reply to Sir George Simpson and the Council of the Northern Department, dated London, April 6, 1853 (A.6/30, fos. 79-92d.)

understand Kittson traded very few furs during the past season, though I believe he had a good many packs of robes, for which, however, he paid a high price.

37. Lower Red River also exhibits a very tolerable result, say

Outfit 1850	£1395. 17. 9
„ 1851	2027. 17. 1

The increase is considerable in Musquash, and the number of Martens have risen from 134 to 502.

38. In Lac la Pluie there is an increase in every description with the exception of Lynx, the total result being

Outfit 1850	£3154. 17. 5
„ 1851	4222. 16. 11

Considering that Lynx used to be considered the staple fur of these three last frontier districts, and that the number traded this season at all the three, only amounts to 364, I think the result must be looked upon as satisfactory.

I regret to state that some deaths took place among the Indians attached to the Lac la Pluie District from Starvation, no less than ten having perished within a few days' journey of an outpost called Lac de Bois Blanc. They were in American Territory at the time, and the person in charge of the Post had no knowledge of the distressing fact, till some time after it had occurred, so that no blame can be attached to him for it. Very great distress will recur in that District next Winter, I fear, as the rivers are so high that no wild rice can be collected, and the rabbits, though said to be beginning to re-appear are still far from numerous.

39. At Norway House District the trade for the past Outfit has not yet come in, there being yet fifteen good hunters to come in to this establishment and some also to Nelson river, but the returns will fully equal if not surpass those of last year—

Outfit 1850	£5650. 13. 7
„ 1851	4914. 16. 11

Here also the chief increase is in the article of Musquash,

while there is a falling off of Martens. The business of the Depot appears to be satisfactorily conducted by Mr. C. F. Barnston,¹ and the different Brigades have all been passed on to York Factory. You will observe by the Minutes of Council that we have re-appointed Mr. Barnston to this charge for the Current Outfit.

40. Before I left Red River Mr. C. T. Buchanan arrived at Fort Garry from Fort Pelly. He was unable to give me a detailed account of the trade of Swan River, as he had not received the accounts or returns from Shoal River post, one of the principal outposts of the District which would be picked up by the Boats proceeding to York Factory, but the returns will be considerably better than last year, probably more than 500 Martens in excess of the previous outfit and a large increase in Musquash. Mr. Buchanan has been appointed to succeed C.T. Black in the charge of Red River Settlement, and will be replaced in Swan River by Mr. William Joseph Christie² from Churchill. I was unable to appoint a commissioned gentleman to this charge, but Mr. Christie is a very active and zealous officer, and will I think do every justice to his new charge. Mr. Buchanan recommends the erection of an additional Post chiefly for the purpose of collecting provisions in the neighbourhood of the Touchwood Hills, and as the additional expense will merely consist in the Wages of an Apprentice Postmaster his proposition has been favorably entertained by the Council.

41. From Oxford House Mr. Bell writes on 6 April and states that affairs have been progressing smoothly, and it was expected that the returns would fully equal those of last year, the chief Returns, however, will consist of Beaver—Martens are not so numerous as last year—Mr. Bell has been appointed to Cumberland House in place of Mr. Lewes who proceeds to England by the ship, and Mr. Nicol Finlayson whose health

¹ For a biography of George Barnston, see *H.B.S.*, III, 427.

² William Joseph Christie, who joined the Company as a clerk in 1843, was a son of Chief Factor Alexander Christie. See Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 124-5.

compels him also to cross the Atlantic will replace Mr. Bell for this season in charge of the Fur Store.

42. From York Factory Mr. C.F. McTavish¹ writes on 1 April at which date the prospects of trade were on the whole favourable. At Churchill and Trout Lake the trade had been particularly good while at Severn owing to scarcity among the Indians, the returns did not promise so well.

43. The annexed copy of a Letter² from the Bishop of Rupert's Land to the Governor and Council of the Northern Department will convey all the information I have on the subject of Missions under the superintendence of His Lordship. As there appears to be no certainty of a Clergyman coming out to York Factory this season, no resolve in Council has been passed on the subject, but I shall address Mr. C.F. McTavish on the subject, and I have no doubt that he will do all in his power to make the Reverend Gentleman as comfortable as circumstances may admit; in my opinion little can be done there in the way of converting the Indians, as the resources of the place are so limited that it is impossible to collect a large body of people in the vicinity. I may make the same remark with regard to Fort Pelly, where we frequently find considerable difficulty in keeping up the necessary supplies for our own establishment, but I understand that it is in contemplation that Mr. Hillyer should join some band of Plain Indians, and accompany them where those are in pursuit of the Buffalo. These animals of late years are only to be found at a considerable distance from Fort Pelly, so that the proposed Mission Hunter will not I think do much toward the support of a Mission establishment. The White Dog on the Winnipeg River is in my opinion a mere waste of money. The natives of that Section of the Country, Salteaux, are by no means a docile race, and there is no good fishery in the vicinity, so that it will be useless to expect that the Mission can be carried on unless large supplies of flour and pemican are sent out from Red

¹ William Mactavish.

² Neither the original nor a copy of this letter has been traced in the Company's archives.

River, the expense of which will prove a heavy burden on the funds of the Society.

A case of illicit trading of furs took place here last winter on the part of one of the engage's at the Mission, a Red River Half-breed. He procured from an Indian a Silver Fox and a prime Otter skin, which he traded at Lower Fort Garry. I afterwards learned that he had procured them improperly, and felt it my duty to address His Lordship on the subject and the matter was ultimately settled, by making this man refund the cash he had received for the Skins. This example I trust, will have a beneficial effect on the other Mission Servants.

At the time the water in Red River was at its height, and people were taking in consequence the most desponding view of the prospects of the Colony, the Bishop had it in contemplation to break up the Schools and send home Mrs. Mills. As I considered the School for the young women of this Country a matter of great importance, and as I feel assured that it will be impossible to procure a more excellent teacher than Mrs. Mills, I addressed His Lordship on the subject, engaging on the part of the Company to meet any Requisition made on our Stores at Fort Garry for the use of Mrs. Mills' establishment at the usual Market rate—say Beef 2d. pr. lb. and Wheat 3/6 per Bushel. I do not think that this will cause much additional expense to the concern, but even if there is a trifling rise in the price of provisions consequent on the Scarcity arising from the flood, I am sure it will be cheerfully borne by the Fur Trade, looking to the object for which it is incurred.

We are not disposed to recommend any new stations for Missionary purposes at present. As I have already mentioned these multiplied Missions are a very heavy drain on the limited resources of this Country, and under the present circumstances therefore we are not anxious that the number should be encreased. I mentioned to his Lordship the wish you have expressed that you should be annually informed of the progress the Missions are making, and that wish will in future be complied with.

44. Mr. C.F. Barnston speaks highly of the conduct of the Indians at Rossville, whose attention has not been diverted

from hunting by locating them in a village. I understand that Mr. Peter Jacobs¹ has proceeded to Red River Settlement & that it is his intention to proceed to Oxford House, where they do not seem as yet to have made much progress.

45. Referring to the Minutes of Council herewith, I do not see much in the different resolves that have been passed that will require particular comment on my part. I have experienced some difficulty in filling up the different Districts this season, owing to the want of commissioned gentlemen on active Service. Mr. C.F. Ross's² state of health prevents him returning to duty. This gentleman last year availed himself of his rotation of furlough which he passed in Red River, and leave of absence on the ground of ill health has been granted him by Council for the Current Outfit. Mr. Ross applied to me for another year's leave of absence previous to retirement, but I replied that in accordance with your instructions I could make no such promise, but would lay the matter before you for your consideration. Mr. Ross has been a very pains-taking and zealous officer, and has been constantly in active service for the last 21 years, and I am sure that if any deviation be made from the rule you have laid down, there could not be a case more deserving your favourable consideration. As Messrs. Chief Factors Ogden & Rae could not take advantage of the season of absence granted them last outfit until more than half thereof had expired—It has been considered by the council a mere act of justice that their leave should be extended to the Current Outfit. We trust that this will meet with your approbation.

Chief Factor Lewes applied to the Council for three years leave of absence, previous to retirement, founding his claim on forty five years of (he trusts faithful) services and the loss of his right hand. We have given him leave for the current

¹ A native missionary who was licensed to preach in 1838 and the author of *Journal from Rice Lake to the Hudson's Bay Territory, and returning* (New York, 1858). He visited England in 1850-51, where he apparently attended religious gatherings "in full Indian Chief's costume". Jacobs was expelled from the Methodist ministry in 1858.

² Donald Ross. See Introduction, p. lxvi.

outfit, but with regard to the additional years, must leave the matter in your hands.

Chief Factor Nicol Finlayson's state of health has rendered it necessary that he should cross the Atlantic this season, but as far as I know, it is his intention to return to active service after the expiry of his furlough.

46. Under these circumstances I have been unable to place the Districts of Athabasca and Swan River under the charge of commissioned gentlemen, but from Mr. Butchers¹ long experience in that District I hope that he will be able to conduct the affairs thereof satisfactorily, and I hear such a good report of Mr. W.J. Christie that I have little doubt he will be found fully competent for taking charge of Swan River.

47. The Requisition for the Northern Department as proposed by Mr. C.F. Wm. Mactavish amounts to about £21,000 but as I learn from many of the gentlemen in charge of the several districts, that they will not require Outfits on such an extensive scale as last year, we have accordingly reduced it to £18,000. Mr. Mactavish informs me that if the Indent had been priced at the same tariff as last year it would have been nearly £2000 less than it now amounts to, but he observes that the articles imported last year were of much higher cost than has been the case for some years. The reason of this augmentation of price, the goods being I presume of the same quality, we have here no means of ascertaining. We have to request that the reduced Indent say £18000 be complied with in full.²

Serious complaints have been made this season on the part of the different gentlemen in charge of Districts as to the

¹ Francis Butcher (or Boucher), clerk. The name "Francis Butcher" appears in the body of the covenant executed after he was appointed a Chief Trader in 1852, but the signature to it is "Francis Boucher".

² A.6/30, fo. 89, Governor and Committee to Simpson and the Council of the Northern Department, dated London, April 6, 1853, "33. The Indent for the Northern Department amounting to £14,700 has been allowed. On the subject of prices, alluded to by Governor Colville, we have to observe that the extraordinary demand for export to the Australian Colonies and elsewhere had raised the price of almost all commodities. Prices have continued to advance, nor is there at present any prospect of a fall, exportation continuing undiminished".

quality of the Guns. In one instance one of the Guns was found to have been packed without a hammer, and it is said that the Mainsprings are too stiff. I have also been requested to state that the Canada Roll or twist Tobacco is spun far too large; it is always sold by measure, and it is considered that it should in no case be thicker than to weigh 7 feet to a lb.

48. From the unusually small quantity of men applied for from the Columbia this year, say 20 Servants, and a considerable reduction in the number required in McKenzie River, consequent on the abandonment of the west branch route; I am inclined to think that we shall have fully more than we require next outfit, and we have accordingly applied for only half the number of those asked for last year, viz

From Europe on 5 years Contract

2 blacksmiths at £25 Wages

1 Cooper at £25 „

25 labourers at £17 „

From Canada on 3 years Contract

10 Labourers at \$100 wages

49. I have handed the commission appointing Mr. William Mactavish a Chief Factor to Mr. C.F. Lewes, and desired him to return the Covenant when executed addressed to Mr. Secretary Barclay. I shall pursue the same course with the commission & covenant¹ of Mr. Robert Campbell which will be transmitted to Mr. C.T. James Anderson by the Athabasca Brigade.

50. In accordance with your instructions the standing rule with regard to retiring Servants to Red River has been re-established.² I have here to remark that this rule was not rescinded last year from a wish of encreasing the pauper settlers of Red River; but because it was considered a hardship to compel a retiring servant to purchase land from the

¹ In A.33/2.

² See p. 115, n. 3. In their letter of April 7, 1852 (A.6/29, fo. 169d.), the Governor and Committee remarked: "As we consider the Rule a very proper one we cannot sanction its being rescinded. It is not expedient to encourage the Settlement of a pauper population there, and this is a check against it".

Company and not leave him free to purchase where he himself might think fit, and in my opinion there is no subject, which is so frequent a cause of complaint among the old servants at Red River as this.

51. By the 72 Resolve of Council¹ we have made what appears to me an equitable arrangement with respect to the journeys of Missionaries of the Church of England on Mission business. The following resolutions, I trust, are framed in accordance with your wishes as expressed in the 56 and 58² Paragraph of your Dispatch.

52. I have been requested by the gentlemen composing the Council to express their unanimous wish that some arrangement be made with Adam Thom Esq. either by giving him an annuity for a certain number of years, or by such other means as to your honors may seem expedient so as to induce him to retire, as they feel a decided objection to the Fur Trade continuing to pay £700 a year for the performance of duties that are merely nominal. I feel it is my duty to forward this expression of opinion on the part of the Council, stating at the time, that the opinion was elicited by nothing that I had said in the matter.³

¹ See p. 58, and B.239/k/3, pp. 42-3, Minutes of a Council for the Northern Department of Rupert's Land, beginning at Norway House, June 17, 1852, Resolved 72: "That a passage be allowed to any of the Missionary of the Church of England in the Company's Craft when travelling on Mission business; and in case no opportunity offer a craft shall be provided for such Missionary by the Gentlemen in charge of Posts & Districts Provided always that the expences of any one Mission shall not exceed in any one year £20."

² The paragraph concerned in the Governor and Committee's letter of April 7, 1852 (A.6/29, fo. 167d.), is number 37: "As regards travelling expences in the case of Missionaries of the Church of England we cannot of course refuse to them the exemption which we have granted to the Wesleyans and Roman Catholics, but we think some limit should be fixed beyond which Missionaries of all descriptions should pay their own expenses. Twenty pounds for each Mission, as suggested in Mr. Colvile's letter of the 4th June last, seems a reasonable allowance".

³ A.6/30, fo. 90d., Governor and Committee to Simpson and the Council of the Northern Department, dated London, April 6, 1853, "... we have to acquaint you that in compliance with this wish we have made an arrangement with Mr. Thom, by which he will vacate the office of Recorder at the close of Outfit

53. I shall next observe upon such subjects treated of in your letter, as have not already been referred to. We trust that you may have been able to dispose of some of the Beaver¹ at private Sale before the departure of the vessel for York Factory; but we shall Notify Mr. C.F. McTavish of your intention of addressing him on the subject by that opportunity. I do not think that the number of Beaver will be found much in excess of last year's exportations, unless indeed the returns from Athabasca and McKenzie River, should be very prolific in this article.

54. The Accounts from the Columbia this year do not appear much more explanatory than last, but I do not think this is to be attributed to the Accountant at Fort Vancouver, Mr. Hardisty,² who, I am informed, has been most assiduous in his duties. Mr. Ballenden complains in his letter of the unusually 1853". See Introduction, p. cvii. The Deed of Revocation of Thom's appointment as *Recorder* had been sent to Eden Colvile on December 6, 1850 (A.6/29, fo. 17d.). See also pp. 58, 121.

¹ A 6/29, fo. 16od., Governor and Committee to E. Colvile and the Council of the Northern Department, dated London, April 7, 1852, "5. About half of the Beaver imported last autumn still remains unsold, nor do we see much prospect of its being disposed of at present." A group of beaver (*Castor Americanus*) from the importations of 1851 was shown at the Great Exhibition of Works of Industry of all Nations held in London in 1851. The *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue* (II, 530) remarked: "The beaver in former years was one of the Hudson's Bay Company's most valuable productions; but since its use has been almost entirely discontinued in the manufacture of hats, it has lost much of its value. Experiments have, however, been made, and with prospect of success, to adapt its fine and silky wool to weaving purposes. The skin of the beaver is prepared by a new process, after which the surface is cut by a new and ingenious machine, and the result is a beautiful fur for ladies' wear. It is exported in its prepared state to various parts of Europe and the East. The rich white wool from the under part of the beaver is largely exported to France". As early as February 3, 1846, Edward Roberts, Accountant to the Hudson's Bay Company, remarked in a letter to Sir George Simpson: "... in the Beaver Hat Trade we can see no signs of revival, the colour & shortness of the silk nap, have now so much the preference that were it possible essentially to reduce the price of the Beaver Hat, it is questionable if their sale would be much extended" (D.5/16).

² Joseph W. Hardisty, who joined the Company in 1847 and became a Factor in 1872. He was a brother of William Lucas Hardisty (see p. 226, n. 2), and Richard Hardisty, junior (see p. 261, n. 2).

late arrival of the accounts from Fort Victoria, and the very incomplete state in which they were rendered. Looking at the very numerous Staff of Officers & clerks, this is somewhat inexplicable. It appears that this establishment consists of 1 Chief Factor, 1 Chief Trader, 2 Clerks, 1 Clerk & Surgeon and three App. Clerks. With such an establishment I should think the business might be better conducted.

55. We consider the determination¹ you have come to respecting the screw vessel for the service of the North West Coast, very judicious, as vessels propelled, when necessary by steam power, are much more adapted for the navigation of the Straits and Inlets in that quarter than sailing craft. It is not, I suppose, intended that she should depend wholly on her steaming powers, but only use the engines during Calms or adverse winds.

56. Monseigneur Tache² the newly appointed co-adjutor

¹ A.6/29, fo. 163, Governor and Committee to Eden Colville and the Council of the Northern Department, dated London, April 7, 1852, "14. We have been considering what would be the best sort of vessel to replace the *Una*, and have determined to build one of from 280 to 300 tons measurement and fit her with a screw to be driven by Engines of the combined power of 50 horses, and are about to enter into a contract for such a vessel. She will be of light draught of water, and carry a large cargo, and will be as useful as the *Beaver* from having the Screw power to be used when required. From the estimates which we have received the cost will be about £9000". A.6/30, fo. 86, Governor and Committee to Simpson and the Council of the Northern Department, dated London, April 6, 1853, "23. The Screw Steamer . . . is called the *Otter*, and measures 287 tons . . . The command . . . was given to Mr. Joseph Miller . . . and she left Plymouth on the 4th February last, taking out part of the North West Outfit for 1854".

² Alexandre Antonin Taché (1823-94). He became a novice in the Oblate Order in 1844 and in the following year went to Red River as a missionary. From 1846-54 his headquarters were at Ile-à-la-Crosse. In 1851 he was consecrated coadjutor Bishop of St. Boniface and on the death of Bishop Provencher in 1853 he became the second bishop of St. Boniface. Taché was created Archbishop and Metropolitan of St. Boniface in 1871. See Wallace, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, II, 650, and Hargrave, *Red River*, pp. 127, 135-7. A.6/29, fo. 168, Governor and Committee to E. Colville and the Council of the Northern Department, dated London, April 7, 1852, "39. M. Taché the coadjutor of the Bishop of the North West lately applied to us for a passage to York Factory for three priests and a Catechist. These reverend persons

Bishop did not make his appearance at Sault Ste Marie in time to come on by the canoes this Spring. I suppose he will make his way to Red River by the way of St Paul in company probably with the other priests, for whom he requested a passage in the York ship.

57. I note that the request of Mr. Wills¹ has been complied with and shall address him accordingly. By the Minutes of Council you will perceive that we have engaged Mr. Hackland² for three years at £100 per annum, as we entirely coincide with your opinion that it is better policy to keep tried Servants, even at an advanced rate of Wages, than to employ inexperienced hands when it can be avoided.

58. We regret that you have been unable to supply the labourers indented for from Orkney as we find them far more docile and obedient than those engaged at Stornoway, but have no doubt that your injunctions to the Agent at this latter place will have a beneficial effect.

59. We note your instructions respecting the course to be pursued in the case of Hebert, and shall act in conformity thereto.³ With regard to McKay, as his conduct seems on the whole to have been praiseworthy we suppose there will be no objection to his remaining in the service.

60. It is with great satisfaction that we learn that the negociation about the Kings Posts⁴ has at length been settled

he stated were to proceed to the Interior in order to continue the Missionary work commenced at Fort des Prairies, Athabasca, Peace River, and the vicinity; he also requested a passage for himself and his Chaplain by the Canoes from Sault de Ste. Marie to Red River Settlement. The latter request we complied with, but the crowded state of the York ship would not admit of our allowing the priests a passage by that vessel. We understand they will proceed by way of the United States".

¹ John Mills Wills, clerk and surgeon at York Factory since 1849. He had requested to retire in 1852 (A.6/29, fo. 168). For references to him and to his wife, who accompanied him from England, see MacLeod, *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*.

² James Hackland, sloop in the York Factory District (B.239/k/3, p. 41).

³ See p. 119, n. 2.

⁴ A.6/29, fo. 170, Governor and Committee to E. Colville and the Council of the Northern Department, dated London, April 7, 1852, "52. The negociation which we have now for eight years been carrying on with the Canadian

on reasonable terms. We also learn with pleasure that the arrangements made last year for carrying out the wishes of the Lords of the Admiralty have met with your approval.¹

61. The recommendations for filling the vacant Chief Traderships will be forwarded as usual. Having now brought the business of the Council to a close it is my intention to leave for Red River, and shall proceed thence direct to England; upon my arrival I shall be in readiness to furnish any additional explanation with regard to the affairs of the Country that may be deemed requisite.

I have the honor to be
Gentlemen
Your Most obedt Servant
(signed) E. COLVILE

Adelphi Hotel
Liverpool 5 *Sept.* 1852²

Archd. Barclay Esqr.
London

MY DEAR SIR

I have just arrived at this place per Steamer *Africa*, and shall forward as a parcel per Railway the Packet from the Northern Department. As I have found no letter here from Hudson's Bay House, I have determined on proceeding direct to Scotland, but should my presence be for any reason desirable in London, I have to beg that you will communicate with me

Government respecting the Kings Posts, where lumberers and others have been permitted, greatly to the detriment of the trade, to invade the privileges of the Company, has we are happy to inform you been brought at last to a successful issue by an abatement of nine tenths of the rent . . . a new lease [has been] granted for the occupation of the King's Posts during the pleasure of the Crown, to be terminated at any time after a notice of 18 months; the Company to have no exclusive privileges . . .".

¹ See p. 67, n. 1.

² A.12/13.

(address to Craig flower, Dunfermline, N.B.) and I shall lose no time in reporting myself at Fenchurch Street.

I remain

My dear Sir

Yours very truly

E. COLVILLE

P.S. I beg to advise having drawn on the Govr. Deputy Govr. & Committee from Montreal for the sum of £175 Sterling, & trust that the bill will be duly honoured

E. C.

Craigflower Dunfermline

11 *Septr.* 1852¹

Archd. Barclay Esqr.
Hudson's Bay House
London

SIR

The Deputy Governor has placed in my hands the letter addressed to yourself by Mr. Benjn. Hawes, under date War Office 28 Aug: together with copies of letters from Major Caldwell and Captn. Hill on the subject of the losses sustained by Fort Garry Enrolled Pensioners in consequence of the rise of the River during the past Spring, with a request that I should give a statement of the facts of the case to be laid before the Board.

I beg to observe, that when I took my departure for Norway House for the purpose of attending Council, the waters had not sufficiently subsided to allow the Pensioners to return to their houses, and my stay in Red River Settlement after I returned from Norway House was so short, that I am not so fully acquainted with the details of the losses incurred by the

¹ A.13/5. A copy of this letter is in A.8/15, pp. 51-3. A copy was also made and sent to the Secretary at War under cover of a letter from Archibald Barclay dated September 21, 1852.

Pensioners, as to enable me to report accurately thereon. I may remark, however, that only three of the Pensioners have actually lost their houses, though there can be no doubt that many of those submerged will require some repairs, not, in my opinion, of a very extensive nature, to render them habitable. From the locality of the Pensioners' allotments they have suffered less than the generality of the settlers in the neighbourhood of Fort Garry, as the land was somewhat higher, and the houses, being newly constructed, were better fitted to resist the current. My impression is that the three men, who did lose their buildings, were settled on a low point of land acquired by themselves, not from the Company, but from some settler.

The fencing, as was generally the case throughout the settlement was carried away by the flood, but a large proportion thereof was stopped at different wooded points on the River, and from these points the more industrious of the Corps had procured a sufficiency of fencing stuff, as to enable them to put in crop.

The only instance I know of the loss of Cattle incurred by any of the men, was an ox that was drowned in a creek when conveying provisions to the encampment; and as the man lost his animal while employed in the public service, I thought it right to replace it with one of our own.

When I left the settlement on 9 July the men had all returned to their houses, and had put in crops of barley and potatoes, and I have little doubt that the more industrious among them will soon be in as good a position as they were before the flood. With the exception of the three cases named in the margin of Major Caldwell's letter, I am not of opinion that the loss in any one case will amount a very serious matter.

With respect to the measures that were adopted on the rising of the water, I have to state that, when the Pensioners were compelled to leave their own allotments, accommodation was provided for them for some time in Fort Garry, and when obliged to leave this by the continued rise of the waters, they were despatched to a high ridge about six miles from the Fort and placed under canvass. Captn. Hill accompanied the men

to this encampment, and exerted himself very energetically and successfully in keeping up their spirits. Rations were supplied from the Company's stores to such of the men as required provisions, to be repaid by small monthly stoppages from their pensions.

With regard to the petition forwarded to the Secretary at War through Major Caldwell I would wish to observe that this petition was signed, while the men were naturally despondent, but I am inclined to think that after they have got things a little in order on their allotments, the sober and industrious among them will view the matter in a more cheerful light, and be inclined to withdraw their names from the petition. I have no doubt that Mr. Chief Trader Buchanan, the gentleman in charge of Fort Garry will do all in his power to alleviate the distress of the Pensioners, but I would suggest that it would be by no means advisable that pecuniary recompense should be made to them, as that would create discontent among the other settlers, and encourage similar demands from the Pensioners on all sorts of frivolous pretexts. It appears to me preferable that instructions should be sent out to make the necessary advances for the repairs of the damage, and that the term of repayment be placed on an easy footing by stoppages from the Pensions. The great misfortune of the settlement is, that the Company have hitherto done so much for the people, that they look to it in all times of emergency instead of relying on their own industry and exertions, in consequence of which they do not thrive, or endeavour to produce any thing that would pay the cost of transport for exportation.

In conclusion I would remark that no apprehension need be entertained as to scarcity, as there was a large quantity of grain in store, and in that portion of the settlement which escaped the flood an unusual breadth of wheat was sown, while from the submerged lands good crops of barley and potatoes may be expected, so that I have no doubt the inhabitants of Red River will get well through the winter.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant
E. COLVILLE

London 21st Octr. 1852¹

To the Governor
Deputy Governor & Committee
of the Honble. Hudson's Bay Coy.

HONBLE. SIRS

I beg to submit the following report respecting the best route to the country lying to the North of the 49th parallel of latitude on the West side of the Rocky Mountains.

In the summer of 1849 I proceeded by Athabasca and Peace River to New Caledonia, and descended the upper part of Fraser's River to Alexandria (below which point the navigation becomes dangerous down to Fort Hope)—crossed from Alexandria to Thompson's River on horseback, a journey of five days, through a country mostly prairie but with some hills, and thence, still on horseback, a further journey of six days to Fort Hope on Fraser's River, from which place I descended the lower part of Fraser's River a distance of 60 miles, to Fort Langley, which may be considered the sea port.

The only difficulties to be found on this route are a range of wooded hills that lie between the Similkameen River and Fort Hope. I crossed them with loaded pack horses in three days, although the road had only been opened that season. It was through some of the heaviest timbered land I ever saw. I measured one tree that was forty-two feet in circumference, and the avoidance of such trees as had fallen across the road necessarily consumed much time.

Since I passed, I understand, a very considerable amount of labour has been expended by the Hudson's Bay Company in improving the road. The fallen timber has been chopped and removed, the land on either side cleared, the swamps drained,

¹ A.13/5. A copy of this letter, together with an extract from a letter from James Douglas dated July 12, 1852, was sent by the Governor of the Company, Andrew Colville, to the Earl of Malmesbury, Foreign Secretary, under cover of a letter dated October 28, 1852. The matter under consideration was "the proposed convention for effecting a sale to the Government of the United States of the possessory rights reserved to the Hudson's Bay and Puget Sound Companies by the Oregon Treaty" (see p. 9, n. 3). Copies of this correspondence are in A.8/19, pp. 14-18.

the ascents of the hills rendered less abrupt, and grass seeds sown at the different encampments, so as to afford an abundant supply of forage for horses.

The route by Fraser's River is thus from the sea port at Fort Langley to Fort Hope (a distance of about 60 miles) a water communication by large boats at present, which are rowed up against a considerable current, but apparently the River is quite suitable for steam navigation—; from thence to the Similkameen River across a range of wooded hills by horses for a three day's journey. From thence the route is across a prairie country Northerly to Thompson's River and Alexandria, beyond which the country is not likely to be occupied except for the purposes of the fur trade.

The route Easterly from the Similkameen River to within a short distance of the Arrow Lakes on the upper part of the Columbia River is through a prairie country, and offers no obstacle to the transport of goods and people in any direction.

I should, therefore, think this will at all times be found a preferable route to the country North of 49° , and it has the additional advantage of lying wholly within British territory, and of being much shorter than the route by the Columbia River, probably not above one third of the distance.

The entrance to the Columbia River from sea is more difficult and dangerous than that to Fraser's River, and vessels are often detained for some weeks on the voyage from within the bar to Fort Vancouver.

On my return to the East side of the Mountains I left Fort Vancouver in March, and proceeded in a small open boat up the Columbia. The first obstruction, called the Cascades, lies at about two days march above Fort Vancouver, and here the boats have to be unloaded and dragged over the Portage. For another day and a half to the "Grands Dalles" the navigation is uninterrupted, but above this the falls and rapids are so numerous, and the navigation so tedious and dangerous, that I proceeded on horseback to Fort Colville a journey of fourteen days.

Formerly the supplies of goods for Fort Colville were taken in small boats, but there was more loss of lives and property

by the destruction of boats in the rapids of the Columbia than in all the rest of the Company's territories, and of late years the outfits have been conveyed by the route of Fraser's River, although, to obviate difficulties with the United States Government on the subject of duties the outfit was last year forwarded from Fort Vancouver, and by pack horses from the Dalles to Fort Colville.

I have the honour to be

Honble. Sirs,

Yours obedient Servant

E. COLVILE

APPENDIX

EDEN COLVILE'S LETTERS TO
SIR GEORGE SIMPSON, 1849-52

APPENDIX

Cumberland House 10 July 1849¹

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

I will begin a letter to you from this place as it is uncertain when or where we shall meet Sir John Richardson.² We have not made a very rapid passage to this place, though we have lost as little time as possible. We encamped at what I am told is called, Les trois Isles, the day we left Norway House, & started the next morning at 3, but had to put ashore in an hour and a half owing to the wind. At 8.30 we started again, & shortly afterwards met Ermatinger,³ with whom I had a talk, & at noon it blew great guns, & we had to run for it, & put ashore on a shingly beach, exposed to the full force of the wind. We managed with some difficulty to get the baggage ashore without wetting it, or breaking the canoe, though it was a very awkward place, & I tried to make a start in the evening, but they could not keep the canoe straight owing to the swell, & it was very nearly smashed. We remained here, a prey to bull dogs by day, & mosquitos by night from Sunday 1st inst. until 6 o'clock on Thursday the 5th when we made a start though it was still blowing hard, & managed to make the Grand Rapid. We encamped that night at the Lower end of Lac Travers; from which place we made the Pas in two days, which people hereabouts seem to consider very good going.

The water is unusually high, but we had a fair wind the whole way; on the Saturday it blew furiously, & we carried away two masts; and at one time we went such a pace that Fraser looked quite blue at it. We got to the Pas about 9 o'clock & found Hunter⁴ had gone to bed, but I knocked him

¹ D.5/25. This letter is addressed: "*Private* Sir G. Simpson Hudson's Bay House Lachine", and is endorsed: "*priv.* 1849 Cumberland Ho: 10 July Eden Colville Recd. 11 Octr. Ansd. personally".

² Sir John Richardson was returning from his expedition in search of Sir John Franklin. See *H.B.S.*, XVI, xl-ix, 77 et seq.

³ Chief Trader Francis Ermatinger. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, II, 212-13.

⁴ The Rev. James Hunter. See Introduction, p. 1, and p. 253. Paul Kane in 1846 (*Wanderings of an Artist*, pp. 109-10) described Hunter's house as

up, & gave him his letters & went to sleep at Constant's¹ hôtel. We were well wet to the skin as it had been raining all day with thunder & lightening, so I remained till 2 o'clock the next day to [get] our things dry, & passed the time by breakfasting with Hunter, & then going to church. We took what is said to be a short cut, by the Barrière, but the water was so high that we had a good deal of trouble in making out the channel of the River, & could not make out to get here last night, as I had hoped to do. However, we are in very good time. I am afraid I have given you rather a tedious account of our voyage, but there were no very great events in it. Mrs. Hunter² produced a babby about a fortnight ago but it did not live very long. She is looking as if she had had a hard time of it, but seems in tolerable spirits. Hunter has a splendid mansion, & looks very fat & comfortable. He is building a very large church there, larger I should think than there is any occasion for. Madame Constant³ complains that she is getting very thin, but she is still about equal to one and a half of Mrs. Christie.⁴ I found old Constant very civil, & took rather a fancy to him. He told Fraser that it was quite time that somebody should take Deschambaults place here, as he was quite under the control of his wife, whose father & Mother are kept at the Fort. I must say that it is the untidiest & dirtiest

"... neat ... most brilliantly decorated inside with blue and red paint much to the admiration of his flock ...".

¹ Presumably the "little shrivelled up French Canadian" who kept "the small trading post" at The Pas in 1848 (Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist*, p. 432). He was settled at The Pas at least as early as January 31, 1822, for, in his private journal, Governor Simpson recorded arriving at "Constants House".

² A daughter of Chief Factor Donald Ross. The first Mrs. Hunter was at The Pas when Paul Kane passed in August 1846 (*Wanderings of an Artist*, p. 110). She died on November 20, 1847, and Hunter married Jane Ross in the following June (see p. 253, and MacLeod, *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*, p. 231).

³ Kane (*Wanderings of an Artist*, p. 432) referred to her in 1848 as "... a Cree squaw, one of the most extraordinary looking women I had ever seen. She was so fat that she was obliged to sit on a small waggon, in which they drew her about, and her mode of going to bed was by rolling off this on to a buffalo skin. She had not been able to use her legs for many years ...".

⁴ Anne Thomas, wife of Chief Factor Alexander Christie (E.4/1^b, fo. 243).

establishment I have seen in the country, notwithstanding the great show that Lewes' store makes. The cattle here are very fine and in good care, & there seems to [be] a prospect of a good crop of wheat & potatoes & I should think, with a little attention to cleanliness a man might live very comfortably here. We found Miss Jessie Campbell at the Pas, she had come in L'Esperance's boats from Red River, on a visit to her sister Mrs. Turner. She is very plump looking young lady, by no means angular, & had fallen in love with a Canadian half breed on the way, & wanted Hunter to marry them, but the sister vehemently objected, & persuaded her out of it. I found Ermatinger, as you forewarned me, full of jaw. He says that the reason of the clerks at Vancouver giving notice of retirement is not from a wish to go to the "diggins", but from disgust at the way they are treated by the Chief there, meaning I suppose Douglas—but I could get no particulars out of him, & I should judge from his manner that he is somewhat loose in his assertions. By the way it has struck me that it would be prudent for the Company, when they make the allowance to the Board of Management, as proposed in your general despatch, to have a distinct understanding, that it is to cover all claims for past services. I mention this to you, because it seems to me that the difficulty about Christie's pay as Governor of Assiniboia arose from the want of such an understanding though I may be wrong. I am getting on very well with my "Compagnon de voyage",¹ though I have to snub him occasionally when he begins his stories about different people in the country. He is the most diabolical snorer I ever met with, & always swears the next morning that he did not sleep a wink. I am afraid you must have had a most tedious passage through the lake, at least if you had anything like our weather. All my men have behaved very well, & Pierre, though he does not look like it, is an angel. I forgot when I was at Norway House to ask you to bring me up some tobacco next year. I should like about 10 lb. of the best honeydew, which may be got at Rattray's in Notre Dame Street for 5/— Currency per lb.

¹ Chief Trader Paul Fraser. See p. 1, n. 3.

I left word with McIntyre¹ that you would pay for my washing at Norway House, & I should also be obliged by your giving him five dollars, or what you may think right, less or more for himself. Pray keep a memorandum of all these little disbursements, & bring it up with you, that I may make a settlement with you next year. On second thought I have determined to leave this here, in case we should accidentally miss Richardson, & I will write a note by him if we do meet. With kind regards to Lady Simpson, not forgetting my friends Miss Margaret McKenzie Simpson, & her sisters, Believe me to be

My dear Sir George
Every yrs. faithfully
E. COLVILLE

Isle a la Crosse 22 July 1849²

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

I wrote you a long letter from Cumberland House, which I left there to be taken by Sir John Richardson en passant, & as we have seen nothing of him as yet, I shall leave this here for the same reason. We arrived here in ten days from Cumberland, overtaking L. Esperance yesterday morning about 5 o'clock; & he made his appearance here this morning. I do not think we had any very wonderful event on the road. I am getting a little weary of the politics of the County of Glengarry, & of the reminiscences of the ambition & interestedness of the men of the olden time in this country but I believe I take it philosophically enough considering all things. I found old McKenzie³ here very brisk, going about on his crutches, & plenty to say for himself. I delivered him

¹ John McIntyre, who was on the staff of servants at "Lachine House". See Simpson, *Journey Round the World*, I, 60.

² D.5/25. This letter is addressed: "*Private* Sir George Simpson Hudson's Bay House Lachine", and is endorsed: "*priv.* 1849 Isle à la Crosse 22 July Eden Colville Recd. 11 Octr. Ansd. personally".

³ Chief Factor Roderick Mackenzie, senior, (see p. 115, n. 4), broke a bone in his left leg on December 10, 1843, and was obliged to use crutches thereafter.

your letter; & he seems annoyed that you took no notice of his complaints about the Indians from this place having gone to Carlton & Fort Pitt to trade their furs. He does not like the appointment of Deschambault to this place much either & says that though he is a good lad, (rather an antient lad), he is a great deal too easy both with men & Indians to take charge of a district, which he imagines is the intention, after his own retirement. He asked me, whether I knew who you proposed for Chief Factors, & who they were, which after some consideration, I thought fit to tell him. He seems to think it hard upon Tod & Campbell,¹ but I suppose will give you his nominations as usual. I do not know whether you will approve of my answering his questions, but I did it for the best. He seems very apprehensive that there will not be enough of provisions for the McKenzie River Brigade either here or at Fort Chipewyan, but I suppose it will turn out all right at last. I have got an old man named Charles Lafleur to be guide to Athabasca. He looks a very tough specimen. I had a visit from the priest² yesterday. That thief that did nothing but grin & rub his hands at Norway House last year has got as fat as a pig on white fish. I do not think I have picked up anything else worth communicating. I will write you a few lines by McPherson³ from the Portage. I mean to start after dinner to day, but as usual we have a head wind, though not very much of it. With kind regards to Lady Simpson & your little ones

I remain

Yrs. very faithfully

E. COLVILLE

¹ Presumably John Tod (see *H.B.S.*, III, 459-60) and Colin Campbell (see *H.B.S.*, I, 432).

² The Rev. Alexandre Antonin Taché. See p. 162, n. 2.

³ Chief Factor Murdoch McPherson. See *H.B.S.*, XVI, 87, n. 1.

Portage de Terre Blanche, Clearwater River
26th July 1849¹

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

As this will very likely be my last chance from this side of the Mountains I just send you a line to say that we got over Portage La Loche yesterday & met Sir John Richardson, McPherson, & Bell here this morning at 6 o'clock. We made a good day of it yesterday. We started from the head of the last rapid of the River La Loche, through the Lake & to the Portage by 11. I sent the canoe off forthwith with six men, & hired horses of an Indian, & we encamped at the other end about 7. Desjarlais² was in this River with his horses, as he says he cannot live at the Portage. The McKenzie River Brigade is still behind, having been detained by the ice. Sir John seems a little testy about his letter, but otherwise is chatty enough. I was quite in raptures with the view from the Portage, & should have enjoyed it much more had there been fewer Mosquitoes. This is a bare apology for a letter, but it will let you know I am alive, & I want to be off, and have really nothing to say. With kind regards to Lady Simpson

I remain

Yrs. Sincerely
E. COLVILE

Dunvegan 19 August 1849³

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

I wrote you a few hurried lines from this side of Portage La Loche per favour of Sir John Richardson. I am sorry to say that we by some accident missed the McKenzie River Brigade between that place & Fort Chipewyan so that I was

¹ D.5/25. This letter is addressed: "*Private* Sir George Simpson Lachine Canada East", and is endorsed: "*priv.* 1849 Clearwater River 26 July Eden Colville Recd. 11 Octr. Ansd. personally".

² Joseph Desjarlais, horsekeeper, Athabaska District.

³ D.5/25. This letter is addressed: "*Private* Sir George Simpson Hudson's Bay House Lachine", and is endorsed: "*priv.* 1849 Dunvegan 19 Augst. Eden Colville Reed. 4 May Ansd. personally".

unable to hand your letter to Lane,¹ & I found there was no chance of an Indian canoe overtaking him on this side of the Portage, so I left the letter with Todd² to be forwarded by the first opportunity. We arrived at Fort Chipewyan on 29th July left it on the following morning, reached Fort Vermillion by breakfast time on 7th August & this place on the 17th inst. to breakfast. The river was very high as far as Vermillion which has been somewhat against us, but it has been falling ever since. The mosquitoes have been so thick as actually to have impeded our progress, as the fellows had to be everlastingly scratching their faces, & got no sleep at nights, although we generally encamped on battures away from the woods, but on the whole I think we have come on very well. Neither at Vermillion or this place was there a single bag of pemican, & I am remaining here till the Fort hunters bring in a moose, which with some potatoes & some very bad dried meat must take us on to Stuarts Lake. Everything in these quarters seems to be going on much as usual, except that animals are getting scarcer, & mosquitoes more numerous than they used to be. Forty Indians are said to have died of starvation during the winter, & Butcher & his people lived for some time on dried suckers, which appear to be about as nourishing as a pine shingle. We saw no moose, & only four bears on our way up, & not a single Indian between Peace Point, & Smoky River, but we killed plenty of flappers & a lynx, so that we have lived pretty well on the whole, & have still got our bag of fine pemican untouched. At Vermillion we found nobody but Shaw³ & a small Shetlander.⁴ Ermatinger had ordered all the winterers' families down to Fort Chipewyan as he thought they would be more cheaply fed there than above. I hope to get away from here tomorrow early, as I am tired of living on half rotten bear. I do not think

¹ William Fletcher Lane, clerk. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, II, 229-30.

² James Todd, postmaster in the Athabaska District (B.239/g/89).

³ William Shaw, a native of Rupert's Land. He had apparently been in charge of Fort Vermilion since he joined the Company in 1839 as a Postmaster.

⁴ John Tait (or Tate), labourer, from Delting, Shetland Islands (B.239/g/89; B.39/b/12, fo. 52).

I have any news to give you. I trust that the next time I have to make so long a voyage I may have a more intellectual companion, though the fellow does his best to be useful. I have no doubt that the letter I will write you when I reach the Pacific, will come to hand before this. With kindest regards to all your family

Believe me to be
Yrs. very faithfully
E. COLVILE

Fort Victoria 15 Octr. 1849¹

Sir G. Simpson
Lachine

MY DEAR SIR

There is a vessel here called *The Colloney* of Glasgow, which is loading with a cargo of lumber for San Francisco, & I propose to send this letter by her to be forwarded viâ Panama to New York. I think you will by this route receive it much sooner than if I sent it by the *Columbia* which will also sail as soon as *The Cadborough* arrives from Nisqually, which she is expected to do daily.

I enclose you a copy of my letter of this date to Sir J.H. Pelly,² to which I beg to refer you for my ideas on some of the things I have seen in the course of my journey. I made out pretty well on the whole though I experienced much difficulty in getting horses to bring me on from Alexandria to Thompson's River & thence to Langley. Some measures must be taken for encreasing the stock of horses, for I believe that many of those that were employed in bringing in the New Caledonia outfit this year are so galled & done up, that they will not live through the winter. They appear to have no person in that district fit to act as horse keeper, & the number of horses is

¹ D.5/26. This letter is endorsed: "1849 Fort Victoria 15 October Eden Colvile Recd. 18 Feb. '50 Ansd. personally".

² See p. 1, and n. 1.

greater than the men can properly attend to, so that they are galled by their loads most awfully.

The desertions still continue & will cause great derangement to the business, I fear. Five head shepherds at Nisqually, after announcing their intentions & deliberately making out inventories of the property under their charge, walked off to California lately, & 9 men belonging to the *Columbia* & the steamer bolted from this place in a canoe. It has been found necessary to double the wages of the seamen in the *Columbia*. The sailors belonging to the *Colloney* are paid at the rate of 140 dollars a month, which of course causes dissatisfaction among the people in our shipping. A military post has been established at Nisqually by the U.S. Government, but of course they will not interfere to catch deserters from the service. There have as yet been no desertions from Colville, but I believe at Vancouver there is not a white man employed about the establishment, and I think it will be necessary to break in Indians at the different posts to do a great part of the work now done by white men. It will be necessary of course to have a certain number of reliable people in each establishment & these must be well paid or they will not remain. In the mean time goods & country produce command good prices & are in great demand. As an instance one Simmonds¹ at Newmarket contracted to deliver some hundred thousand feet of lumber at 16 dollars per M to Mr. Douglas, & the supercargo of the *Colloney* has bought the whole of it at 60 dollars, which is a tolerably good speculation.

The Indians in this neighbourhood are very well disposed, & seem more inclined to agriculture than most that I have seen. They raise a good many potatoes on their own account, & are always willing to work for the Company. The land is of good quality, about 2 feet of black mould with a subsoil of loam—but the quantity of prairie land is limited, & this island is by no means suited for either stock or sheep farming. I

¹ Apparently a reference to M. T. Simmonds, an American from Kentucky, who came to Puget Sound in 1845. See *British and American Joint Commission* . . . , "Evidence on the Part of the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company", pp. 34-5.

saw Captain Grant the other day here, but have not had time yet to pay him a visit, which, however, I propose to do shortly. I should judge from what I saw of him, that he is not the best colonist in the world. Mr. Douglas speaks very well of Mr. Mure the headsman of the coal miners, & the rest left this place very well satisfied. They worked very well while they were here & I have no doubt a great quantity of coal will be got out this winter. By the last news from the mine between 600 & 700 tons had been collected by the Indians who were well disposed towards the whites.

The steamer being under repair, it will be impossible for me to take a run to Setka,—or the North West Coast. Douglas seems to think that one cannot explore the interior of the island without getting knocked on the head by the Indians, but I dare say I shall find plenty to do without running that risk. He does not seem to know what to do with Paul Fraser.

Mr. & Mrs. Staines¹ are located for the present in the fort. He is rather a prig, & does not get on very well with the occupants of Bachelor's Hall, but is I believe a very good schoolmaster. There is besides one of the Perès Oblats² in the Fort, so that religious wants are amply supplied.

I do not think of any thing worth writing so with kind regards to all your family

I remain

Yrs. faithfully

E. COLVILLE

¹ See Slater, "Rev. Robert John Staines: Pioneer Priest, Pedagogue, and Political Agitator".

² Begg, *History of British Columbia* . . . , p. 478, "... From 1849 to the beginning of 1852, a French Oblate, Father H. Lemfrit, of Olympia, resided chiefly at Fort Victoria. During that time, and as may be ascertained by the documents kept in the bishop's palace, he baptized upwards of three thousand Indians, children and adults, a score or so of half-breed children being among the number . . .".

Fort Victoria 26 Oct. 1849¹

Sir George Simpson
Lachine

MY DEAR SIR

I sent you all my news by San Francisco, under date 16 [15] inst. & since that time I have remained here without having much to do. The weather has been so thick with a mixture of fog and smoke, that there has been no great inducement to move about; I do not think I have seen the sun for more than two hours since I left Langley, but as it is now raining furiously I hope the weather will eventually clear up.

As you will see from the enclosed copy of letter to Sir J.H. Pelly² I propose to go to Vancouver next week with Mr. Douglas. Business in that quarter appears very flourishing; & the profits this year, as far as regards this side of the mountains will be very large. Captn. Grant made his appearance here last night. He had boarded a U.S. schooner bound for this place, which it cannot reach owing to the calm & foggy weather. The Captain has a packet of letters from England on board, & I hope some for me. He brings 350 barrels of flour from Vancouver, & being a Government Vessel will take no pay for the same, saying that he is delighted to have an opportunity of repaying some of the numerous civilities his countrymen have received from the Hudson's Bay Company. Is not that an unwonted piece of civility.

C.T. Tod arrived here yesterday from Nisqually. He has recovered his health & intends to retire & settle in Vancouver's Island, provided always he can get the land for nothing. Tolmie³ demands £300 per annum from the Puget's Sound Coy., or 300 acres of land in Vancouvers Island, & threatens to retire unless he gets either one or the other. He has I imagine a touch of the gold fever.

¹ D.5/26. This letter is addressed: "Private Sir George Simpson Hudson's Bay House Lachine", and is endorsed: "*priv.* 1849 Fort Victoria 26 Octr. Eden Colville Recd. 4 May Ansd. personally".

² See p. 6.

³ Dr. William Fraser Tolmie. See S. F. Tolmie, "My Father; William Fraser Tolmie".

I have really no news to give you—so with kind regards to
Lady Simpson & family

I remain
Yours faithfully
E. COLVILLE

Fort Vancouver 24 Novr. 1849¹

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

I enclose a draft of my letter to Sir J. Pelly² from this place, which I trust you may be able to read. I do not know that I have much news to give you in addition to what you will find there. I have not stirred from the fort since we arrived on the 21st, but as soon as General Smith has taken his departure I mean to go round the country. We have a large party here just now. Sir Edward Poore & Franklin³ arrived with the express. He seems to have quarrelled with Kane,⁴ & Phillips foot was too bad to allow him to make the journey. We have sent them off to Oregon City. He is very anxious to

¹ D.5/26. This letter is addressed: "Private Sir George Simpson Hudson's Bay House Lachine", and is endorsed: "*priv.* 1849 Ft. Vancouver 24 Novr. Eden Colville Recd. 13 March Ansd. personally".

² See p. 8, and n. 1.

³ See p. 10, n. 2. Sir Edward Poore, Bart., described as "Young wild and hardy", was living near Cobourg, Canada West, in April 1849, and had apparently made an earlier trip to the West (D.5/25, fo. 116). Sir George Simpson's circular letter dated Red River Settlement, June 15, 1849, to the Gentlemen in charge of posts on the communication from Red River to Fort Vancouver, introduced "Sir Edward Poore Bart., who, accompanied by Messrs. Kane, Phillips & Franklin and a servant" wished to travel to Fort Vancouver (D.4/70, fo. 233d.).

⁴ Paul Kane, the artist. The record of his journey of 1846-48 in search of material for sketches of Indian life is to be found in *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America* . . . Kane was attached to Sir Edward Poore's 1849 party as "Conductor, Guide, Interpreter, &c. &c.", but his services were dispensed with at Red River. He and Mr. Phillips returned to Canada via St. Peter's in August 1849 (D.5/25, fos. 336, 606). See also Kidd, "The Wanderings of Kane", p. 8.

come on to Victoria, but there is no room for him there. What he is going to do with himself he does not appear to know, but on the whole I should say he was bored to death. Poor Charles you will see by my letter has been shot by that Yankee shipbuilder Young. I am very sorry for it, for he is very well spoken of by every body here. Young does not seem to take it much to heart.

I think that in the present times, as much might be made out of the property here, by selling it in detail, as will be obtained out of the United States Government—& by keeping all the rights secured to us under the treaty, we could continue to carry on the business more easily & profitably than if we had to carry it on as in a foreign country by means of an agent. The military authorities seem utterly regardless of expense, & rather trade with us than with their own countrymen. Ogden has managed them very well. I suppose the matter will be decided one way or the other in the course of next session of Congress; but should the United States not buy us out, I think it most important that some declaration should be made, that they would not dispute the titles of American citizens holding lands by deed of sale from the Hudson's Bay Company.

Allan is going to set up as a sugar planter in the Sandwich Islands, in connection with McKinlay I believe; though the latter has not quite decided as yet & there will be a considerable clearing out of the clerks here. Young Sinclair, who had given notice of retirement has agreed to sign a new agreement, on condition of getting £75 for three years—of which the current year is to be one. He is employed in the stores here & gives great satisfaction. In fact at this time you can keep neither men nor clerks here without paying them well. Dr. McLoughlin¹ has refused \$350,000 for his property at the Falls, one half to be paid in cash, & says he will not sell it under \$500,000. This will give you an idea of the unnaturally high value of property & labour goods produce &c. are in proportion. There will [be] a great smash before long. Money has become exceedingly scarce in San Francisco.

¹ Dr. John McLoughlin, retired Chief Factor. See *H.B.S.*, IV, VI and VII.

Merchants paying 30 per cent per month for advances. At least one half of the Canadians who went from this quarter to the mines have left their bones in California, which seems a most unhealthy part of the world—& several have returned worse off than they started, having had to borrow money to return. This will have some effect in stopping desertions I hope. I shall enclose this to Maitland & Coy. in New York. Will you in your first communication with them, thank them for the letters they forwarded here to me, & beg them to present any account they may have against me for postage at Lachine for payment. With kind regards to all your family.

I remain

Yrs. faithfully

E. COLVILLE

P.S. Among the deaths at the mines is Porteous.¹ E.C.

Fort Vancouver 7 Decr. 1849²

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

I append extracts of a letter to my Father, which will give you my ideas on the state of things hereabouts.

“I suppose the effect of Lincoln’s³ motion was the appointment of Govr. Blanshard⁴ in the room of Mr.

¹ As no one named Porteous appears on the Fort Rupert lists of servants, the reference is presumably to the deaths at the gold mines in California. “Porteous” may have been William Porteous, clerk, who retired to the Willamette from the New Caledonia District in 1847.

² D.5/26. This letter is addressed: “Private Sir George Simpson Hudson’s Bay House Lachine”, and is endorsed: “1849 Fort Vancouver 7 December Eden Colville Recd. 11 April Ansd. personally”.

³ A reference to the speech delivered by Henry Pelham Fiennes Pelham Clinton, Earl of Lincoln (later fifth Duke of Newcastle) in the House of Commons on June 19, 1849. For a full report see the London *Morning Chronicle* of June 20, 1849.

⁴ Richard Blanshard, who was appointed first Governor of the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island. Ireland, “The Appointment of Governor Blanshard”, pp. 218–19, “. . . Contrary to the general view, this decision was not a result of

Douglas, which I am very sorry for, as I think that from his experience in the country, & the interest he took in the colony he would have conducted the affairs thereof fully as well as a perfect stranger. Be that as it may I suppose there was no alternative left to you but to appoint a person unconnected with the Company, & we must try and make the best of it. As you make no mention of any colonists coming out I suppose his duties will for the present be confined to governing Grant, who, if his statement be correct, that he has only £3000 in the world, will not be able to live in the island more than two years more, as he is spending at the rate of £1000 per annum, & his men do absolutely nothing but grumble at their accomodation & victuals. His flightiness amounts almost to lunacy, & if the island is not surveyed till he accomplishes it you will have to wait some time. He left some of his instruments at Panama, some at San Francisco, & some here which last have been forwarded. I am sorry for him, for he is a good fellow, but not the stuff to make a settler out of. I would not insist on the condition of bringing out labourers. They will not stop except at high rates of wages, are unacquainted with the use of the axe, & grumble incessantly. If the gold fever subsides some hands might be picked up among the Company's retired servants, one of whom is worth a dozen of such a set of grumbling lawyers as Grant has with him—but the best class of settlers are men with families of stout sons, who will have an interest in the work, & who will all labour with their own hands.

Lincoln's speech, for the minutes of the Governor and Committee show that it was on June 13, six days before the debate, that it was 'Resolved that Richard Blanshard Esq. be recommended to Earl Grey Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, to be appointed Govr of Vancouver Island.' Moreover, the Colonial Secretary had already held his first interview with the prospective Governor, for Pelly, writing to Grey on June 15, makes reference to an interview held the previous Thursday at which he had introduced Blanshard, whom the Committee of the Company were going to recommend for the position of Governor of Vancouver Island. The recommendation was accepted, and Blanshard received his commission on July 16, 1849 ”.

These two big ships¹ coming on us with the prohibition against entering the Columbia River have set us all a scheming how they are to be employed. No contract provisions² are to be sent to the Russians which was one source of employment—Lumber fetches more at the Sawmills here than it would in the Sandwich Islands—& the same may be said of flour. The demand for salmon at the islands is limited, & the only employment for one of the ships after she has taken up the goods to the N.W. coast will be to transport some of the Puget's Sound Coy's stock to Vancouver's Island. With regard to the other, I can see but one of these two things—either to lay the vessel up, or to send her with a cargo of lumber & shingles to San Francisco. Of course for this voyage it will be necessary to pay both officers & men Californian prices, or your ship might be left there; but I think the profits on the cargo will be amply sufficient to do this, & it would be an inducement to the men to remain. Should it turn out to be a profitable adventure, the men belonging to the other vessel might be allowed to take their turn, & the prospect of this would have an excellent effect. It is very unfortunate that at this particular time you have prohibited the *Cowlitz* from entering the River, as it will take at least three trips of the *Mary Dare* to bring in the goods required for this place. The demands are great & the shelves are getting empty. The whole stock of 3 pt. blankets has been sold off at \$10 with the exception of three bales which will not be sufficient to meet the demand up to the arrival of the *Mary Dare*. Should the present state of things continue I think it would be better that the outfits should be sent in a chartered ship, as the

¹ Presumably a reference to the *Cowlitz* and the *Norman Morison* which sailed from Gravesend in August and October 1849 respectively (C.4/1, fos. 27 and 28).

² See p. 144, n. 1. Under article four of the original contract with the Russian American Company made in 1839 it was agreed that the Hudson's Bay Company should supply the Russians annually with certain articles of agricultural produce at fixed prices. This arrangement was omitted from the renewed contract made in 1849.

Mary Dare can do all the coast business, & this is likely to be as good a market for all we have to export as any we can find, so that there will be no employment for vessels in the country, & the men are very apt to desert. Sales of flour have been effected at \$15 & \$20 per barrel & the article is likely to rise as high as \$25 or even \$30. For the crop of next year the farmers will probably demand a corresponding price for their wheat, in which case I think it will be advisable to have no transactions in that article beyond what may be necessary for the support of the establishments. Mr. Ogden has rented the sawmill here to the U.S. Quartermaster for six months certain, or a year if the lessee pleases, at the rate of \$14,000 (fourteen thousand dollars) per annum. In ordinary times such a mill might be built for about a thousand dollars, so this will give you some idea of the state of things.

I think it would be as well to give Barclay a hint not to be quite so tart in his reprimands. I allude to a letter that was received by the Board of Management from him respecting the not furnishing of a duplicate of a certain letter. Civility costs nothing, & at this time is even more necessary than usual.

You will say I am as great a grumbler as Grant's men, but I think it as well to give you my candid opinion, & you can use your own discretion about shewing this to Sir J. H. Pelly."

8 Decr.

I have very little news to add to the above. We have just received accounts from Victoria. A ship¹ from California full of passengers having put in there with loss of rudder, mizen mast, & jib boom for repairs, & the passengers have come across the Cowlitz Portage. Every prospect of a famine in California. Flour selling at \$60 & expected to reach \$100. Lumber \$400 per M. Their arrival seems to have set all the

¹ See p. 12.

men at Victoria in a flame—as is to be expected. Men working for £20 per annum, seeing fellows no better than themselves with bags of gold dust. We start for that place the day after tomorrow, with Sir E. Poore & Franklin. They are harmless creatures & take life easily—giving no trouble. Poor Douglas received accounts of the death of his youngest daughter a baby about 10 months old. Sailor's wages seem to be falling a little at San Francisco—say \$100 per month, & 400 vessels in port. I hope the next mail is to bring us letters from you. I heard of your arrival in a letter from Madame—of 17 Aug. I have no more news to give you. With kindest regards to Lady Simpson & your chicks.

Believe me
Yrs. Sincerely
E. COLVILE

Fort Victoria 14 Jan. 1850¹

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

I enclose you draft of a letter I have written to Sir J. Pelly²—and have really nothing to add thereto. News is a scarce commodity in these parts. Lumber you will see sells well, & I wish we [had] half a dozen sawmills here instead of one. Dodd³ has sent in his notice of retirement, partly because he was not promoted, & partly because he cannot agree with Thorne the Engineer. Wishing you all the compliments of the season

I remain
Yrs. Sincerely
E. COLVILE

¹ D.5/27. This letter is addressed: "*Private* Sir George Simpson Lachine", and is endorsed: "1850 Fort Victoria 14 January Eden Colville Recd. 11 April Ansd. personally".

² Presumably the letter dated 14th January, 1850. See p. 14, and n. 1.

³ Charles Dodd, commander of the *Beaver*. He retired in March 1851, but re-joined the Company in the following year and again took command of the steamer (C.1/208 and B.226/b/6, fo. 42). See Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, pp. 145–6.

Fort Victoria 6 *Feby.* 1850¹

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

I enclose you a letter to Sir J. Pelly,² which will give you an idea of my goings on—and have very little to add to it except that I have performed my first administrative act, as will appear from my letter to McNeil herewith enclosed.³ He had made up his mind to retire unless he got leave of absence & Douglas thinks that Blenkinsop⁴ will do very well at Fort Rupert, so I complied with his request *à tout risque*. I should like to hear that the miners have discovered a good seam of coal before I leave this, as it will be a profitable business, & the only thing about Vancouver's Island worth having. The North end of it, is about the most rugged barren looking country I ever beheld. I have no news to give you, except that I hear Tolmie is going to take Miss Jane Work as a wife. With kind regards to all your family I remain

Yrs. faithfully
E. COLVILLE

*Private*Lower Fort Garry 15 *August* 1850⁵

Sir George Simpson
Lachine

MY DEAR SIR

I enclose my correspondence with Sir J.H. Pelly & Barclay⁶ open for your perusal; when you have read them you

¹ D.5/27. This letter is addressed: "Private Sir George Simpson Hudson's Bay House Lachine", and is endorsed: "1850 Fort Victoria 6 February Eden Colville Recd. 11 April Ansd. personally".

² See p. 16, and n. 2.

³ This enclosure is not attached.

⁴ George Blenkinsop, clerk. He became a Chief Trader in 1855.

⁵ D.5/28. This letter is addressed: "Private Sir George Simpson Hudson's Bay House Lachine", and is endorsed: "*priv.* 1850 Red River 15 August Eden Colville Recd. 28 Septr. Ansd. 5 Dec.".

⁶ A letter to Barclay dated August 14, 1850, is on pp. 21-4, but no letter to Pelly about this date has been traced in the Company's archives.

can seal them up & forward them to London. I am not on a bed of roses here, as you will see by the said letters, but I suppose the angry feelings here will subside in time, & I am doing my best as a pacificator. Ballenden has quite convinced himself, or more properly speaking Thom has convinced him of his wife's innocence, & he looks on her as a much injured woman, who has given no cause whatever for the calumnies against her. As a natural consequence he is exceeding wroth against those he considers her calumniators, & refuses to hold any intercourse with those who do not permit their womankind to visit her. The former class consist of Pelly & Black & Mrs. Cockran, the latter of Caldwell, the Bishop, & the rest of the parsons. When I arrived here I found that Ballenden & Black were living at their respective sides of the house at the Upper Fort, holding no communication with one another, & anxiously expecting my arrival to decide who was to have the charge of the district. Ballenden wished me to let him have it, & at the same time to let it appear, that I had done so, as shewing that Black had behaved so badly in the matter that he deserved to be deprived of the charge. This I at once refused to do, telling him at the same time, that I considered, from his general popularity with the settlers, & his experience in the management, that in a business point of view his appointment would be preferable, in my opinion, & that if Black chose voluntarily to give it up, I should be well pleased. Black, however, though he admitted that Ballenden, might in some respects be better fitted for the charge than himself, said that he considered it would be a slur upon his character, should a change be made in the arrangements for the fourth time, & that he did not see why he should be made to suffer for the vacillation of Ballenden. On the whole, therefore, as I concurred with him in these remarks, I determined not to interfere with the arrangements made by the Council. I then, in accordance with your desire, told Ballenden that I would meet his wishes with respect to his movements & should be very happy to give him quarters at the Lower Fort if he made up his mind to remain at the settlement. He was down here to day, & has determined to take possession of the cottage

outside the Fort, an arrangement that I consider much pleasanter for myself than if he lived in this house. As it would be inconvenient for the Pelly's to be so near him, & as both he & Black seemed to consider it the best arrangement, I have determined to send Pelly to the Upper Fort to take charge of the accounts, & retain young Lane,¹ who seems a swaggering sort of chap, here. I told Ballenden, that as he, the party chiefly interested, had convinced himself of Mrs. B's innocence, I should have no objection that she & my wife should visit, with which, poor fellow, he seemed much delighted. This last was a step I did not much like, as the "nobs" of the womankind do not do so—such as Mrs. Caldwell, Miss Anderson & the other parson's wives, but I think on the whole I was right, & their visits will be merely formal, as I do not think she is the sort of person that my wife would be very intimate with under any circumstances. Altogether the state of things is most unpleasant, though somewhat ludicrous, withal. For instance, today, the Bishop & his sister were calling on us, & in the middle of the visit I heard a knock at the door, & suspecting who it was rushed out & found Mr. & Mrs. Ballenden. I had to cram them into another room till the Bishop's visit was over, but as he was then going to see the Pelly's he had to pass through this room, so that I had to bolt out & put them into a third room. It was altogether like a scene in a farce. You will see what I have proposed to Caldwell. I have written such a full account of it to Sir John Pelly & to Barclay, that I have very little more to say on the subject. I must trust to you to make it all right with the Committee, as I have serious doubts whether the course I have taken will be in accordance with their views, but I feel convinced that it is the only way to restore peace & quiet. If I find that Caldwell objects to my proceedings I intend to let him try to go on a little longer & I have no doubt that he will soon find himself in such a fix that he will be glad to succumb. When I left him, however, the other day he seemed quite content that I should assume his duties.

¹ William D. Lane, who had joined the Company as an apprentice steward in 1843 (B.135/g/27).

We made out our journey very successfully, though it was a long business, and Madame was not so much fatigued as I expected. We are beginning to be settled in our new abode, but we shall not be very comfortable till the boats arrive from York with our goods & chattels & servants. I sincerely trust that you found Lady Simpson's health perfectly reestablished & your son & heir & all your other children in good health. I send by this canoe, a packet of shoes & 6 doz. buffalo tongues to Collingwood.¹ Will you kindly see that he gets them. I will write you more fully by the next canoe, but am so interrupted by visitors &c. that I must stop for the present.

Believe me

Yrs. very sincerely

E. COLVILLE

Lower Fort Garry 26 *August* 1850²

Sir G. Simpson
Lachine

MY DEAR SIR

I enclose as before open for your perusal my letters to Sir J.H. Pelly & Barclay.³ You will see from them, that since I wrote last events have been few, & I have very little to add to what you will find therein.

I understand that, though Ross & some of the Counsellors, are a little sore at the "wiggling" I have given them in my letter, yet that on the whole, they are so well pleased at my compliance with their request, that they care very little how I intimated it. I have had no opportunity of seeing Ross since I wrote, but I have no doubt by five minutes talk I can put the matter all to rights. The fact is I thought it as well to keep the Major in a good humour, which could only be done by

¹ Presumably the Mr. Collingwood mentioned on p. 22.

² D.5/28. This letter is endorsed: "*priv.* 1850 Red River 26 August Eden Colville Recd. 31 Octbr. Ansd. 5 Dec."

³ See pp. 26 and 30, n. 1.

flattering his vanity a little, & with him I have succeeded to my heart's content. The Bishop of Rupert's Land also was very well pleased with the letter, & will keep the parsons right, who are all strong partisans of the Major. The said Major is I think the most unmitigated ass I ever had to do business with. He complains bitterly of you, I can hardly tell for what, for he is so rambling in his discourse that he rather sets me a dreaming, while he is talking, but he says you have treated him cavalierly, and so forth. He is, of course, very much put out by the Councillors all refusing to act with him, but he and I are on the best of terms at present, and if I can, I will keep so.

Ballenden has settled down in the lower end of this house, as he found the cottage too small for him, he sent his three eldest children home, under the charge of a Mr. Lamsden, who was a teacher in McAllum's school. Mrs. B. seems very quiet, and does not bother us in the least. I am inclined to think that she has been more sinned against than sinning. In fact it seems a dreadful place for scandal, and these parsons and their wives are very strait-laced. Thom's conduct on the trial seems to have been as unlike a judge as anything could be, and I do not think his " Bench Report " will be considered a very satisfactory document by Sir J. Pelly. He is, for a clever man, endowed with marvellously little judgment. If you agree with me as to the propriety of Ballenden's resuming the charge here next year, I think you should send up some one, as his assistant, who would be fit, in case of necessity of assuming the charge, for, although Ballenden's health is decidedly better, yet he is subject to fits of depression at times, and there is no knowing when another attack may come on. I think it will be a very good thing to get Black out of this, for he is not liked by anybody but the Major and the parsons; and I do not consider him a first rate man of business. Pelly is a poor nervous creature, but would do very well at Vancouver in the office, and he is very anxious to go there. I write about all these things now, that you may have time to think over them, and I do not suppose I shall have a chance of writing to you till the winter express starts.

Have I done right in my arrangements about that man

Foss's supplies? I remembered what you said about the Committee not liking to have matters referred to them, but as they ordered that he should be a member of the mess, & you left no specific instructions about the payment for his supplies, I was at a loss to know how to act. I wish he and all his pensioners were out of this. We shall have a good deal of difficulty with the Major about finding locations for this fresh lot within the two miles. I mean to have a talk with him about it, when I go up next week.

We are very comfortably settled now, and shall be more so when our goods & servants arrive from York. Johnnie¹ is officiating as our cook, & we found a half breed girl here, a Nancy Fiddler, who makes a tolerable housemaid. Madame is much better pleased with Red River than she expected to be, but I fear will be rather lonely for want of a companion of her own sex. I drove her to the Upper Fort last week, & we went to the Catholic church on Sunday to the great delight of the Canadians; and on Monday we dined with the Major, who had collected all the Bishops, Priests & Deacons in the settlement, and a dreadfully heavy affair it was. In fact I think the less society one has in this place the better, for the people are very dull, and very fond of scandal; & tongues are unruly members. I trust Lady Simpson and all your young ones are going on well. Mrs. Colvile joins with me in kind regards to them and the Finlaysons.

Yours very sincerely
E. COLVILE

P.S. I have desired Collingwood to get a few things for my wife to come up by the canoes in spring. Will you pay him on my account any sum he may ask you for under £10. currency. I shall be much obliged also by your sending me a file of one of the Montreal newspapers.

E. C.

P.S. No. 2. Since writing the above the Schooner arrived from Norway House, bringing the general letter from Dr.

¹ Presumably Johnnie Garton. See p. 206.

Rae¹—Copy of which I enclose. As I had finished my letters to the Hudson's Bay House I have taken no notice of this letter therein, as I thought it more convenient that you should notice the affairs of McKenzie River District for the last outfit, as you have done so for all the other districts. It is rather a disastrous state of things, and Mr. O'Brien² richly deserves being sent out of the service.

E. C.

Lower Fort Garry 19 *Sept.* 1850³

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

Ballenden has at length made up his mind to leave this for England by way of St. Peters. He will, I daresay, be able to give you a better idea of the state of things here by word of mouth, than I can do by letter. I wish he were in charge here, instead of that wretched Black, who is as stupid as an owl—& Pelly is no better or rather worse. I have quite made up my mind that Mrs. Ballenden has been an ill used woman, & I think Pelly richly deserves all he has got, though in my humble opinion Thom mismanaged the matter very much, & I should think has put himself in rather an uncomfortable position with our worthy Governor Sir J. Pelly. I have kept my opinion in the matter pretty much to myself, as I think it would have been inconvenient to the business, had I taken a side in the matter. Ballenden leaves his wife here, & I told him, although against the rules, I should have no objection to her remaining in the fort, he paying one half of the mess expenses, & allowing Jane to mess with her. He will tell you what I propose doing about the Presbyterian question. It will please the Scotch very well, & I think not displease the

¹ Presumably Rae's letter dated Portage la Loche, August 1, 1850, and addressed to the Governor-in-chief, the Governor, Chief Factors and Chief Traders of the Northern Department. See *H.B.S.*, XVI, 129-35.

² John O'Brien. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, VI, 398-9.

³ D.5/28. This letter is endorsed: "*priv.* 1850 Fort Garry 19 September Eden Colville Recd. 24 Octr. Ansd. 5 Dec."

Bishop, with whom I have had a conversation on the matter. I am in hopes that when they see that we have no objection, the Presbyterian ferment will cool down, & that we may be spared a parson of that breed. My Father in a letter to me emitted rather a growl against you for grumbling at there being so many parsons, to which I have replied by grumbling louder. I think our Bishop a very good man, but he is swamping us with these useless black coated fellows, & I would subscribe a handsome sum to ship half a dozen of them out of this. I tell you all this in confidence, as perhaps the old gentleman would not like my disclosing his growls to you. I am afraid we shall have rather a scarcity of pemican, and I have desired Black to buy all the pork & salt that & some beef down to supply the deficiency. I wish we could get the Major out of this. His intense vanity and folly make him actually mischievous. I have kept on very good terms with him hitherto, but I do not think that will last long. I hear that he is trying to get up a sort of counter petition to the one I received, among the French Half breeds with the help of one Rielle alias Irelande¹—wishing him to resume his duties—whether he was selected as being the tallest man in the army, I do not know, but I can see no other qualification he possesses for a place like the one he holds.

I hope Lady Simpson & all your family are in good preservation. Pray remember me kindly to the whole of them and Believe me to be

Yrs. very faithfully
E. COLVILE

Lower Fort Garry 27 November 1850²

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

I enclose you a rough draft of my letter to Barclay,³ which I trust you will be able to read, & do not think I have much to

¹ See Introduction, p. lx, n. 2.

² D.5/29. This letter is endorsed: "*priv.* 1850 Red River 27 November Eden Colvile Recd. 9 March '51 Ansd. 3 May".

³ See p. 34.

add to what I have there said. Events are scarce here, and perhaps no news is good news. My proposition to the Presbyterians was to give them a grant of Frog Plain, & £150 towards building their church—subject of course to the revision of the Governor & Committee. This they refused on account of uncertainties & restrictions; the restrictions being, that I would only make them the grant of the land after they had built the church & got the parson, & of the money after they had commenced to make preparations for building the church. I think some of them, with old Ross at their head, are capable of putting the money into their own pockets. The settlement is perfectly quiet at present, though the other day when we held a Court to try a Miss Parentian for stealing, Mr. Irelande alias Rielle, came to me about $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour before the Court met—to say that the people were determined to keep Thom out. As we had no preparations made for a row, the Magistrates were all of opinion that it would be better for Thom to keep away, but if we have another Court in February I am clear for having him in *Coute qu'il coute*. This fellow Rielle has been puffed up by that stupid old Major making a great man of him, & endeavouring through him to get up a party for himself among the Canadians & half breeds, in which however he has not made much progress. He told me with great solemnity the other day, that he [had] written on the state of things here, & how I had superseded him to Lord Grey¹ & Fox Maule!² as if I cared about Fox Maule. Whether I please or displease Fox Maule is no great matter, but I am rather anxious to hear what Sir J.H. Pelly will say to it all—and how they mean to govern the Colony for the future. That pompous old idiot will never get on that is quite clear. He went the other day [to] Bovetter a little Canadian blacksmith, & asked him & his wife what the people said of him & why they were dissatisfied with him. Madame Bovetter said—“Vy, Major, dey do say you are fit for nothings, but to carry de

¹ Secretary of State for the Colonies. See Introduction, p. lxi, n. 6.

² Fox Maule, second Baron Panmure (of the United Kingdom), and eventually eleventh Earl of Dalhousie (in the peerage of Scotland). He represented the liberal interest of the Burgh of Perth in the House of Commons. See *D.N.B.*

pious pamphlets to de old womans"—He being a great tract distributor.

We are getting anxious about Ballenden's men, who have not yet returned from St. Peters. I trust that nothing happened to poor Ballenden on his way. He had four men with him altogether & I do not know what can be keeping them. They were expected in the beginning of this month.

Should Ballenden not return here in the Spring; you must bear in mind that we must have some one sent up for the charge of this district. Black intends to avail himself of his rotation of furlough, & I am by no means anxious to retain him in the place, if it can be avoided. His manner to the people are so supercilious, that they cannot bear the sight of him, & I do not think his habits are very business like. If Ballenden does not return I think Hector McKenzie¹ is the most suitable, but you will know best.

The Bishop informed me the other day that he will have a parson out by the next ship to take charge of the mission at Moose; so you may keep out papists & schismatics from that quarter. Cockran is going to Canada in the spring, & I told him I would give him a passage in the canoes. Was I right? *Entre nous*—I would be happy to get rid of Bishops Priests & Deacons on the same terms. I had a long visit from Cockran the other day, & I think he is more like a lunatic than any thing else. He is very wrath with Ballenden, accusing him of felony in falsifying the land register, & many other high crimes & misdemeanours.

I have told Collingwood to get a few things for me in Montreal, & he will probably exceed the amount mentioned in my last. You can let him have what money on my account he may demand. Will you send by the Canoes my a/c with you, & state how you wish it settled.

Mrs. Colvile joins with me in kind regards to all your party.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely

E. COLVILE

¹ Chief Trader Hector McKenzie in charge of the Fort Coulouge District. He was appointed a Chief Factor in December 1851.

Lower Fort Garry 4 *Jan.* 1851¹

N.B. You may as well read
this to yourself.

E. C.

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

Mrs. Ballenden having at last beyond the possibility of doubt shewn herself in her true colours; Pelly has made up his mind to despatch an express to St. Peters on his own account to let all the world know it, and I will take the opportunity of writing you a few lines. Just as the regular winter packet was departing, about a month ago, Adam Thom with much caution placed in my hands a copy of letter written by Mrs. Ballenden, to Foss commencing, "My own darling Christopher", and requesting him, as I was to be absent at the Court, to come down and pay her a visit; he was to leave after dark, & she would have a hot supper awaiting him which she hoped he would enjoy, & so forth. The original having been delivered, the said darling Christopher came down & remained closeted in her rooms for two days and nights, but they managed matters so well, that to this hour, though it was of course known that Foss was absent from his own quarters, no one but Thom, myself, and the deliverer of the letter, whose name I cannot even tell you, have been able to prove that he was here. This put me in rather an unpleasant position, as of course I had to put a stop to all association with her, and at the same time was precluded from giving my reason for so doing. However she very soon extricated me from this dilemma, by one fine afternoon driving up to Foss's quarters, and, I believe, passing the night there. This was, with the usual rapidity of scandal at Red River, forthwith made public. She is still residing here, but is, I understand, going to take her departure immediately, at which I shall be very glad. I suppose she will take up her abode with Foss. He has taken lodgings at old Donald McKenzie's,² who is, I believe, almost the only man in

¹ D.5/30. This letter is addressed: "*Private* Sir George Simpson Hudson's Bay House Lachine", and is endorsed: "*priv.* 1851 Red River 4 January Eden Colville Recd. 5 March Ansd. 3 May".

² See p. 205. Donald MacKenzie, clerk in the Hudson's Bay Company's

the place that continues to associate with him. Poor Thom does not like it much, as you may suppose—after all his exertions in her cause. He writes a full account to Ballenden by this opportunity, & I have sent him a few lines also. I suppose, under these circumstances, Ballenden will not like returning to this place, in which case you must find some one to take the charge; for Black, independently of his intention of taking furlough, is, I think, very ill fitted for this place—and I know of no one in the Northern Department, who is well suited for it.

I am afraid trade is going to be very bad this year. I have heard from Norway House & Lac la Pluie, and the scarcity of rabbits & the fur bearing animals is even greater than last year. Donald Ross has been laid up all the fall with the influenza, but by last accounts was getting better.

With kind regards to all your party

Believe me to be

Yours very sincerely

E. COLVILLE

P.S. Will you give the enclosed to Mrs. Collingwood.

Lower Fort Garry 7 *February* 1851¹

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

Your letter dated Lachine 5 November came to hand most unexpectedly on 24th ulto., and very glad I was to get some tidings from the civilized world. I wrote you a few lines service from 1818–50. Frederick Ulrich Graham (later Sir Frederick Ulrich Graham, Bart.) recorded meeting Donald McKenzie [MacKenzie] at Rat Portage in 1847. Graham added that MacKenzie “whose first name was Donald and whose nickname was ‘the major’, he having held a lieutenant’s commission in the army, during the Peninsula War”, had been in the Company’s service for thirty years. See Nute, “Westward with Sir George”, p. 42, and G. L. Nute to H.B.C., March 9, 1937. According to Governor George Simpson (A.34/2, fo. 41) MacKenzie had been “a Lieut. in the Army”.

¹ D.5/30. This letter is addressed: “*Private* Sir George Simpson Hudson’s Bay House Lachine”, and is endorsed: “*priv.* 1851 Red River Eden Colville Recd. 14 June Ansd. 15 do.”.

about a month ago, and since then we have [been] jogging along much as usual. I was very glad to hear that the Bay Ships had arrived safely and also Sir Henry Pelly approves of my superseding the Major. I have said nothing of this approval to anybody here, as I have had no official notification of the fact, as it would only annoy the foolish old man, and make him as mischievous as his deficiency of intellect and influence will allow him to be. I am curious to know what arrangements they will make for the future government of the Colony. My own opinion is that no one unconnected with the Company will be able to get on here, and certainly not a man so utterly deficient in common sense as Major Caldwell. I have succeeded hitherto in keeping on good terms with him, though I have had to exercise a considerable amount of patience. The settlement generally is remarkably quiet, and I have every reason to think, it will continue so. I am afraid the last revelations respecting Mrs. Ballenden will prevent poor Ballenden from resuming the charge here next year, as you and I have both recommended. I think Buchanan notwithstanding his taciturnity would do better here than Black, who appears to me to have no brains, and his supercilious manner gives offence to the people; at the same time I understand that he is somewhat more popular with the settlers than he was. I got a letter from Donald Ross, stating that he had been so unwell that he thought he would be compelled to apply for leave of absence next year on the score of ill health. Should he do so, I think that Black might be induced to remain, and take charge of Norway House. Mrs. Pelly produced a son and heir about a week ago, and I think it will be impossible for her to transport herself and baby to the other side of the Mountains. I cannot understand how the difficulty arose with the Pacific Mail Steam Coy., as I certainly understood when I was at the Coalmine, that there were upwards of 1000 tons already collected, and McNiell seemed to think there would be no difficulty in getting as much more of surface coal from the Indians. I think, in the present state of things in Oregon, no contract of any kind should be entered into, as it is hard to say, how it can be fulfilled. The accident to the *Cowlitz* is the less

to be regretted, as I should think they would have found some difficulty in manning and finding employment for all their vessels.

The mistake about the shoes was not altogether my fault, as I wrote my letters here, and had been assured that the shoes would certainly be sent down from the Upper Fort in time for the canoe. However, pray make my humble apologies to old Louis and the rest of the crew, whom you charged with robbery. Mrs. Colville was much pleased to hear of the reported Marriage of her cousin to the gentleman you call Crow, though I believe his real name is Rooke—and also of the health of all her relatives. I am somewhat wroth that you did not enter into more particulars about the health and appearance of your son and heir¹ and the rest of your little ones. I trust Lady Simpson has quite recovered her usual health. Your account of the state of the West India Steamers is very satisfactory, after all the trouble my father has had with them. There is no harm done about Foss' mess expenses, as before he returned from the Factory a letter from Barclay appeared, saying that he was to be no longer a member of the mess, so I notified him that he must live for the future at his own charge. I think I have already told you that he has taken up his abode with old Donald McKenzie (the Major). I believe I have now touched upon all the different topics of your letter. I shall send you my letter to Barclay unsealed, so that you may read the same and forward it. I have had, as you will see a Correspondence with that wretched Foss about his improvements, and have perhaps done more for him than I ought in allowing him ten pounds above the valuation—but when I did so, I thought it better that he should have no real cause of complaint. As, however, he seems determined to make a grievance, I rather regret having done so. Mrs. Ballenden left the Fort, of her own accord, on the 11th January, and is living at the house of one Cunninghame about a couple of miles from Foss' quarters. He does not visit her openly though I have no doubt he does so under cloud of night. He must be exceedingly wretched, as I believe not a soul

¹ John Henry Pelly Simpson, born in 1850.

in the settlement will associate with him with the exception of Donald McKenzie, and I should think he must be rather weary of the Major's account of the Peninsular War by this time. Mrs. Ballenden talked of crossing the plains to St. Peters in the course of the winter, but as she is expecting her confinement in May I doubt if she will be able to do so. I imagine her intention was to meet Ballenden before his arrival here, and do her best to gammon him. She has no idea of her letter to Christopher having been intercepted and a copy taken of it.

I hope we may get rid of Cockran in spring; he is, I think, almost a lunatic, and inclined to be mischievous. They held a Missionary meeting here some time ago, at which I was not present; and Cockran in the course of his speech, referred to his trip to Beaver Creek, and said that Fisher, under the influence of the Company, adroitly got the Indians out of the way. Black was there, but took [no] notice of this assertion, but Thom, who is at two with the parsons generally just now, made a speech attacking Cockran on this point, with a fling at Black for not doing so himself. Since I began this letter, I had a deputation from sundry of the English half breeds requesting to be allowed to settle about half way to Brandon House. I took time to consider before answering them, but it manifestly cannot be permitted. I am inclined to think that Cockran is at the bottom of this, and intended to accompany them as their parson. I heard a rumour of his intention some time ago, but thought he had changed his mind, and meant to go to Canada as I still trust he will, as he is very discontented and sour. I fancy he feels the Bishop's arrival has rather put his nose out of joint.

I get on very well with my English servants,¹ and finding no

¹ MacLeod, *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*, pp. 253-4, Letitia Hargrave to Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, dated York Factory, August 27-[29], 1850, "... The Fort is not so gay this season as it was last time, but we have a number of obscure people from home ... There are last of all a 'Mr & Mrs Deans' from Londn who are on their way to Rd Rv as valet & lady's maid to the new Govr & his wife, Mr & Mrs Colville who are to winter at Lower Ft Garry Red River. This woman seems very suitable. I have seen her repeatedly & have always parted from her with increased approbation. She has been married for 17 years, has no family, & works like a slave ...".

use for Johnnie Garton¹ during the winter, I have put him into the Sale shop under George Davis,² which he likes very well, as it will teach him how to sell, and he works away in the evening at writing and accounts with George Davis. Since Mrs. Ballenden's departure Jane messes with us, so that the establishment is reduced in some measure.

Before I arrived here Foss had been allowed to get considerably in debt at the Shop, and there is still a balance against him. He is said to be without money at present, and owes a good deal to McDermot and others, but as I imagine he will have a right to pay from the Company, up to the time he would have arrived in England, if he had started in October, there will be no difficulty, I suppose, in ultimately collecting it. I hope by the canoes I may receive some instructions as to his conveyance to England. Should there be room in the canoes I should think that would be the cheapest mode of getting rid of him.

Mrs. Colville joins me in kind regards to Lady Simpson, Mrs. Finlayson³ and the rest of your party.

I remain

Yours very truly
E. COLVILLE

Lower Fort Garry 22 May 1851⁴

Confidential

Sir George Simpson
Lachine

MY DEAR SIR

I received your letter from Lachine under date 5 @ 19

¹ John Garton, listed in the Company's books as a "native", was employed in the Fort Coulonge District from 1846-49. He appears to have been attached to Colville as a servant from 1849 until 1852.

² George Davis, listed in the Company's books as a "native", joined the service as an interpreter and shopman in the Lower Red River District in 1849. He retired in 1871.

³ The wife of Duncan Finlayson and elder sister of Lady Simpson.

⁴ D.5/30. This letter is endorsed: "Conf. 1851 Red River 22 May Eden Colville Recd. 11 Sept. Ansd. 10 Novr."

December on 5th ultimo, enclosing duplicate of your letter of 5 November, receipt of which I acknowledged on 5th Feby.¹ I have also received your letter dated Lachine 4 @ 7 Feby., which came to hand on 21 ulto. I will proceed to reply to these two letters in their order, as I intend to send my reply by Mr. Hargrave to the Sault, and though the receipt of the letters by the canoes may cause me to change my plans in many ways, yet I shall have but little time to write after the arrival of the canoes and before Mr. Hargrave's departure from Norway House.

By the winter express I received a public communication from Mr. Secretary Barclay, and at the same time a letter from the Governor & Deputy Governor respecting Red River affairs, marked *private* and *confidential*.² In accordance with their instructions I forthwith informed Major Caldwell that I should no longer attend the Council in any official capacity. I also sent to the various gentlemen their respective Commissions as Magistrates with the exception of those who were at a distance from the Colony, viz. the Revd. Messrs. Hunt, Hunter & Cowley, and Mr. Ballenden. The clergymen in the settlement, Catholic and Protestant all refused to qualify. Mr. Pritchard & Mr. Pruden also declined on the ground of being superannuated. Mr. Ross refused to act in any capacity under Major Caldwell. Mr. McDermot stated that he had more than he could manage with his own private affairs, & Mr. Bird & Mr. Logan—though they are ready to qualify, are yet so worn out as to be of no practical use. Our bench of Magistrates, therefore, consists at present of Major Caldwell, myself, Mr. Black, Dr. Bunn, & Mr. Grant, which is, with the assistance of the petty magistrates, who relieve the General Court of much unimportant business, sufficiently numerous, though it is open to the objection that all the members are in one way or other in the pay of the Company. This, however, is of the less importance as I am decidedly averse to the Company appearing in Court either as Plaintiff or Defendant,

¹ 7th February. See p. 202.

² Neither the original nor a copy of this letter has been traced in the Company's archives.

and I think with the aid of a little discretion & management it may always be avoided. I managed to please old Ross by inducing the Council to name his son William Ross as Sheriff and Governor of the Gaol in place of the Father. The Council requires some new blood in it also. It consists at present of the Major, Messrs. Black, Bunn & Grant & Bird as laymen and the two Bishops, Lafleche, Cokran, Smithurst, clergymen, & this preponderance of the clerical element causes a good deal of dissatisfaction. I think of recommending to the Committee the names of Francois Bruneau, Thomas Thomas, & Robert McBeath¹ as new Counsellors, & I trust that by the canoes we may hear of a new Governor instead of Major Caldwell.

With reference to Thom's new position I am sorry to say that, although he accepted the new appointment, contrary to the expectation of all his friends, it has in no way conduced to the peace of the settlement, or contributed to rendering him more popular. Before the May Court I took the opportunity of seeing Rielle & others of the Canadian agitators, and explained to them the change in Thom's position, and that he was now servant of the Court instead of Master as heretofore. They replied that in their opinion the people would not let him into court even in the capacity of constable. And this proved to be the case, for I found the excitement so great among the French half breeds, that I believe if Thom had made his appearance he would have been maltreated. I thought it, therefore, better to take it upon myself to desire him to abstain from coming to the Court at all, which he at once consented to do. I have told him also to keep away from the August Court, which will be held during my absence. I informed him, that of course I must write this to the Governor & Committee, and that I would at the same time recommend to them that, if they were still desirous of retaining Mr. Thom's professional services, they had better appoint him as their legal adviser, & Recorder of Rupert's Land, & let him have nothing whatever to do with the Court & Council of Assiniboia or the Colony in any way whatever. As, however, I should think they will in all probability remove him altogether I will give you my

¹ See Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 66-7, 68.

opinion on the names of those you have mentioned as his successor.—Strachan Bethune and Mack I know nothing of, the latter I do not know even by sight, so that I can say nothing of them. Sweeny, in my opinion, is too garrulous, at least I always found him an incessant talker, besides which he used to be rather given to brandy & water. There is also, I think, another objection. He talks very little or no French. At the different Courts I have attended here I have made it a point to conduct the whole of the proceedings in both languages, and I have reason to believe it has given great satisfaction to the French half breeds. If my friend Frank Johnson¹ had a little more steadiness & discretion I should prefer him, as he would keep everybody in a good humour, save and except the parsons perhaps. On the whole I am inclined to give my vote and interest to Cornwallis Monk, who is a fine manly fellow, speaks well in French & English, & has, I should think, as much talent & law as is requisite for this place, where I find the people like honesty & common sense quite as well as all Thom's long dissertations on General Principles. I would place them in this order 1. Monk, 2. Johnson, 3. Sweeney.

We have managed to settle the most of the Pensioners, there are still 9 or 10 inside the fort, & some others located in the buildings at Carey's Point. Those in the Fort I have desired Black to get rid of as soon as possible. That wise Major has got an idea that we are bound to find a pensioner a residence inside the Fort at any period during his seven years. That is to say that if one of them leaves the Fort & settles on a lot of land, & after some time sells out, & quits possession he can again demand quarters in the Fort. I have resisted this proposition, but one might as well argue with a post & I must write to the Committee on the subject to get the matter settled by the War Office. I trust that we shall have no more of these rascals sent out, for they are a great trouble & expense, & I think not the slightest use in the way of keeping the peace.

I have already replied to your observations as to Foss' mess expenses in my letter of 5 Feby., so I will only remark that I

¹ Francis Goodschall Johnson. See Introduction, pp. lxxvii, cxiv.

did not *misunderstand* your views regarding them. I merely could not discover from any one what your views were, or whether you had ever thought on the subject at all. As I told you before, he has been living at Donald McKenzie's since the 5th October entirely at his own expense. I have no idea what he intends doing. He is cut by every body with the exception of old Ross & Donald McKenzie, & would be very mischievous if he could. He amuses himself by writing lampoons on Thom, Dr. Bunn and others, and I wish he were out of this. He and Mrs. Ballenden have carried on their affair with much circumspection, & have not been seen by any one paying one another visits. I note what you say about the Major's quarters. I sincerely trust that we may get rid of him this fall.

I have considerable doubts whether Ballenden will like to return to this place after the news he has received by the winter express, and I have arranged with Black that he should remain in charge of this district for another year, if Ballenden should not come up by the canoes. On the contrary he will avail himself of his rotation of furlough, proceeding to York Factory to attend the Council, and going to England by the Ship from that place. Messrs. Buchanan and Pelly will be appointed as you desire, to the Columbia; the former I suppose to Fort Vancouver, the latter to Fort Victoria. Andrew Bannatyne¹ informed me the other day, that his contract expired on 1 June next, and that he had received a very good offer from McDermot to take charge of a shop and his watermill &c. at Sturgeon Creek. I understand that he is to marry one of McDermot's daughters. I told him that, as he had not given the year's notice I did not think I could allow him to leave the service for another year; but, if he be not released, I do not think it desirable that he should remain in the settlement. I should think he would answer very well at Norway House, & I think of sending Lockhart or Miles² from York Factory, to take charge of the accounts here. I am inclined to think that

¹ Andrew Graham Ballenden Bannatyne, a nephew of John Ballenden (see p. 246). See Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 123-4.

² James Lockhart from Lachine and George Miles, a native of Rupert's Land, were apprentice clerks at York Factory.

the shop at the Upper Fort is much better managed by Magnus¹ without the assistance of an apprentice clerk than it could be in any other way. He is exceedingly active and gives general satisfaction, & does not complain, so on the principle of "Leave well alone" I think it better not to employ Carter² in that capacity. Young Logan³ is in very bad health, having been laid up for some months with fistula, and his services cannot be depended on. I shall inform his Father that he must leave the service for the present year, & if his health is reestablished so as to render him fit for general service he will be allowed to return to it next outfit. I have been very much pleased with the conduct of young Lane this winter. He is very active, zealous and obliging, popular with the customers at the shop, & gets on well with the men. He is very steady in his conduct, and correct in his accounts, and I hope you will not think me wrong in recommending to the Council that at the expiration of his present contract, he be placed on the footing of a clerk on his third contract. He writes a very good hand, & copies correctly though rather slowly. His fault is, perhaps, having a little too good an opinion of himself, though it is a failing more amusing than offensive. All these arrangements are of course contingent on the letters I may receive by the canoes, but I thought it would do you no harm to let you know my present ideas on the subject. I have been agreeably disappointed in Black's management. He has made himself much more popular with the community than I expected he would do—though he rather bores me with his long winded and rounded periods. My understanding with him is that if Ballenden does not come up, he will remain here, so that if you send any one instead of Ballenden I must find some other place for him.

¹ Magnus Linklater, an Orkneyman, who joined the Company as a labourer in 1836. He was storekeeper at Fort Garry from 1841-46 and then retired. He re-joined the Company's service as warehouseman at Fort Garry in 1849. He became a clerk in 1855 and a Chief Trader in 1865.

² Joseph L. Carter, who joined the Company in 1851 and retired in the Columbia District in 1853.

³ Nathaniel Logan joined the Company as an apprentice postmaster in 1849. He was a son of Robert and Mary Logan and was baptised in the Red River Settlement on April 13, 1832 (E.4/1^a, fo. 88d.).

I note you wish that Anderson be appointed to McKenzie River. I have written to Rae informing him that he will be allowed leave of absence for 1852. I have had some difficulty about the arrangements for this district. Both Rae & Donald Ross write me that it is desirable that some commissioned gentleman should be sent in by the Portage boats to attend to the Fall business at Fort Simpson—meaning I suppose the distribution of the outfits. I suppose it will be necessary that Anderson accompany his brigade to Norway House, so I have written to Bell to desire him to appoint W.F. Lane to this business assisted by either Peers or Ross¹ or both of them, as he may deem expedient.

I have written to Butcher² in accordance with your instructions respecting his request for leave of absence. I do not think it is health that has induced the application, but disappointment at not getting his promotion. He is in my opinion one of the most indolent men in the service.

I informed you in my last that Donald Ross had been ailing, & expressed a wish to be relieved; and since I wrote that letter I have again heard from him on the subject in which he states

“In regard to my own health, I am sorry to say no improvement has taken place, it is therefore evident that, should I live till the time come round, I must beg to have a year’s release from duty, in the hope that relaxation & medical advice may prove beneficial; I assure you it has been far from my wish to come to this determination. It being my year of rotation does not in the least influence me, in fact when I mentioned the subject to you first, it did not occur to me that it was so”.

It will be impossible for me to decide upon, who will be the best person to replace Ross at Norway House, should he adhere to his determination, till after the arrival of the canoes, but I fear I shall have some difficulty in filling up his place.

I shall in accordance with your desire recommend to the

¹ Augustus Richard Peers, clerk, and Bernard Rogan Ross, clerk. *H.B.S.*, XVI, 93, n. 1, and 92, n. 1.

² See p. 158.

Council to extend Roderick McKenzie's leave of absence. I note your observations about Chief Factor Lewes, & shall act accordingly. I shall lose no time after the arrival of the Canoes in proceeding to the seat of Council, & will get through the work there with all convenient speed, & hasten off the Saskatchewan Brigade.

I have desired Mr. Black to give me in a statement regarding the mares. I believe very few have been disposed of, and these few were so light that they were not able to bear the English horse. We have at present about 40 mares here, rather more than half of which have been already covered. The mare have never been handled, & we have great difficulty in managing them, as they are as wild as deer. I am sorry to say that since I began this letter, the horse kicked out at Tom Housenac¹ the groom, & struck him on the arm, whereby he has sustained a compound fracture above the elbow. Dr. Bunn has set it, and he appears to be going on well. I have engaged a settler, named Irvine,² an old artillery man, who seems quite capable of managing the horse. While on this subject, I should be glad to hear from you your opinion as to what should be done with the young stock—should they be sold to the settlers in Red River, dispersed to the different posts in the Interior, or driven to St. Peters and there disposed of. I have reduced the price of the horse to the settlers, but he does not get much custom—as they get other stallions at a much cheaper rate, and they do not appear to care much for the breeding of the stallion.

I have called Mr. Black's attention to the trippers of the Portage la Loche Brigade, and they will be given distinctly to understand all that they have to expect in the way of assistance in carrying from the Company's horses. I am quite of your opinion as to the employment of ox carts there—and had

¹ Thomas Howson Axe, "a skillful groom", was engaged in 1848 "to superintend the breeding establishment at Red River" for three years at £30 per annum. He sailed to York Factory in the *Prince Rupert* and had charge of the Company's stock (see Introduction, p. xxx). He returned to England in the *Prince of Wales* in 1853 (A.6/27, fo. 144d., and C.1/843, fo. 3).

² Unidentified.

already written on the subject to the Gentleman in Charge of McKenzie River. Mr. C. T. Anderson informs me that last year the trippers misconducted themselves abominably at Portage la Loche, plundering the Indians of their effects, and ravishing their women. I have desired Mr. Black to point out to the guides that those parties who so misconduct themselves will be punished severely by deductions from their wages or otherwise as may be found necessary.

The tariff in the Red River Sale shops will be left untouched till the arrival of the canoes with the exception of the tobacco, the retail price of which will be raised 50 p. cent.

I find nothing in the Minutes of Council last year altering the custom of granting wintering allowances to missionaries, but take it for granted it is only to be prospective, as I think it would be injudicious to take it away from the Bishop of North West and others, who at present enjoy it. The said Bishop talks of proceeding to Canada by the way of the States to attend some general Council to be held at Montreal. Smithurst is also going to leave the country. The old stories were revived again by the Indians, & he preferred resigning his appointment to the Bishop to having them investigated. This has caused people generally to suppose that all that is alleged against him is true. Cokran will succeed him there. I should be exceedingly glad if we were to lose this latter gentleman also, as he is very troublesome. I had great difficulty in putting a stop to his proposed settlement at Portage la Prairie on the Assineboine. Cowley also, I understand, wishes to get up a half breed settlement at Partridge Crop; and James¹ has been despatched on an expedition to the White Dog on the Winnipeg River, to preach the Gospel to the Saulteux, and dole out to them seed wheat & potatoes. He is to remain there eight days! and leave Philip Kennedy² behind him as head farmer and schoolmaster. I find it almost useless attempting to give the

¹ The Rev. Robert James. See Introduction, p. 1, n. 5.

² In a "List of Missions established in Ruperts Land" compiled circa 1852 (B.235/z/1), P. Kennedy is shown as the Catechist occupying the Church Missionary Society's station at Islington (established 1851) in the Lac la Pluie area.

Bishop any advice on these subjects, as he goes rashly into any scheme, however insane, that is put into his head by Cokran.

I shall have much pleasure in continuing the salary of £100 to Dr. Bunn, who is, to my mind, the most sensible man in the settlement, and I do not know how I should have got on without his assistance in the Court and Council.

I am sorry to hear of the desertion of the Coal miners from Fort Rupert. I think the chief cause of discontent must have been the constant rations of salt provisions; and from the poor nature of the soil it will be some time before much change can be expected in this respect. I certainly saw no instances of club law¹ when I was on the West side of the Mountains, nor were any complaints made to me on the subject; but no doubt both McNeill & Manson are very hot tempered. I had heard nothing of the misconduct of W. J. Christie till I received your letter, but I will make enquiries into the matter when I arrive at York. I am much obliged to you for the various documents you have forwarded to me, all of which will I have no doubt be useful to me. I shall forward your letters for McKenzie River and Athabasca by the Portage Brigade. This, I think completes all I have to say on the various subjects touched upon in your former letter, and I will now proceed to reply to your letter dated 4 Feby.

With respect to the revenues of the settlement I have taken some steps towards relieving the plethora under which they are at present labouring. At the last Council that was held the other day five hundred pounds were voted for the improvement of the roads, in addition to about £160 that was before voted for the purpose of getting down timber for repairing bridges. The Clergy who, as I have already mentioned, form the majority of the Council voted themselves £100 for the aid of their schools, one half to be applied at the discretion of either Bishop. This has been, of course, an unpopular measure with the Scotch, and Dr. Bunn opposed it manfully, but the clergy were too strong against him. Thom's motion about education fell to the ground, he being no longer a Councillor, and no

¹ See *H.B.S.*, XVIII, 237.

other person taking it up. I attended this Council, but in accordance with my instructions, merely as *Amicus Curiae*, and in no official capacity. Bird was too unwell to attend, Black & the Major are virtually parsons, so that Dr Bunn was all alone. I am unwilling to interfere with the grant to the Academy without positive instructions, as the Bishop, I think, bought the premises with the understanding that it would probably be continued—and I think last year he was told at the Council that it would be so. I think the salary to Dr. Bunn is very well bestowed, & Cowan¹ has plenty to do with the Company's servants at the Upper Fort and the Pensioners. He has also the Upper part of the settlement under his charge, while Dr. Bunn attends to the Lower part. I do not think old Bird will draw his pay much longer. He has had a sharp attack of erysipelas in his foot this spring, and is I think breaking up. Grant has taken a sober fit lately, which, if he continues it, may keep him alive a good while yet.

With regard to Mr. Ogden, I certainly made him no promise about leave of absence; he talked to me on the subject, enlarging on his ill health, and I told him that I supposed, if it was absolutely necessary, he would obtain leave of absence, but that I could not guarantee it. I think it will be quite necessary that Mr. Work should have some very able assistant, as he is very old, & far from active.

I am very glad to learn that Grahame² has withdrawn his notice of retirement, as I thought him a very valuable man to the concern. He had the management of the Sale shop at Vancouver, when I was there, and I suppose will be continued in the same capacity. I abstain from remarking on the other appointments mentioned in your letter at present, as I do not know what alterations may suggest themselves after the arrival of the canoes. C.F. Hargrave, I expect to meet at Norway House, as I wrote to him in the winter to proceed thither

¹ William Cowan (1818–1902), the Company's surgeon in the Red River Settlement. See Oliver, *Canadian North-West*, I, 66.

² B.239/1/22 lists James A. Grahame as a clerk in the Fort Vancouver sale shop during outfit 1851–52. He became the Company's Chief Commissioner in 1874.

by first open water, & will be dispatched forthwith to the Sault.

I enclose herewith the papers you requested from the St. Germain,¹ which I trust you will find correct. He expressed a wish to draw the principal of his money, as he wishes to import goods from England. I told him that he had better address you on the subject himself. I have given Mr. Black a memorandum in the matter of Amable Hogue.²

I am very glad to hear that Sir J.H. Pelly has so far recovered as to be able to write—and also that Beaver had taken a rise. The Portage brigade will start on 3rd June, and the other boats about the same time. I have made up my mind to await the arrival of the canoes here, as I may have some arrangements to make between Black & Ballenden which can be only be done by me, as I suppose they will not be on very cordial terms. I do not see anything more in your two letters requiring particular comment.

30 May 1851

I beg to enclose at the request of Cuthbert Grant a letter from the Legacy Office with reference to the estate of the late Angus McGillis,³ and he wishes you to inform him what he is to do in the matter. He told me the money was in the "Lords and Commons", meaning thereby as I judge Doctors' Commons.

¹ The papers were connected with moneys due to Madame St. Germain ("late Anne Auldjo McGillivray") under the will of her father, Simon McGillivray, junior (D.4/42, fo. 27; A. 36/9).

² Medical certificates and receipts were required in connection with a pension due to Amable Hogue (D.4/43, fo. 87-87d.).

³ Angus McGillis was in the service of the North West Company for twenty-five years, and for one year after the coalition of 1821 he was a clerk for the Hudson's Bay Company. He retired to Red River Settlement, where he died on January 23, 1842. Probate of his will was granted to his widow, Margaret McGillis in 1848, and on her death, apparently in 1851, Governor Caldwell appointed her eldest son, Donald, to administer her property. Mary or Marie McGillis, a daughter of Angus and Margaret McGillis, was the wife of Cuthbert Grant.

I have also been requested by the Bishop of Rupert's Land to obtain from you some information respecting the affairs of Alexander Black,¹ son of the deceased Chief Factor Samuel Black, who is at present about leaving the Academy, and proposes going to the States. He understands that you are the Executor to the deceased, and that the affairs are in Chancery. I believe that in the mean time the Bishop proposes to advance him from his own private means something to pay his travelling expenses and set him a going in the world, but he wishes to know what prospect the youth, who will shortly be of age, has of getting anything from his father's estate.

Chief Trader Wm. Todd made his appearance in the settlement the other day from Swan River, and on 25th inst. I had a long talk with him as to his retirement. He went over the old story of his grievances, & his wish to retire as a Chief Factor. I told him that I could not make him that, and so he need not harp any longer on that string—but that as he confessed that his health would not any longer permit him to resume any active service, he had better tell me what would satisfy him, and the upshot of the whole is that I have in writing from him an expression of his willingness to retire after three years furlough. I have given him distinctly to understand that I would make him no promise on the subject, but that it would be laid before the Council. I am somewhat at a loss to know what to do in the matter, though on the whole I am inclined to think that the concern would be well rid of him, even at the expense of his three years furlough; for his health is quite shattered, and yet he may drag on a burden to the concern for these same three years. However I will see what the united wisdom of the Northern Department has to say on the subject before coming to a final decision.

Tom Housenac's arm is mending rapidly, and in the meanwhile Irvine is managing the horse very well. The remainder of the mares came in yesterday, and we have now upwards of sixty here. There are some very fine foals, and yearlings come in also, & I think the horses stock will be decidedly good.

¹ See *H.B.S.*, XVIII, xcvi—c.

I think I may now close this somewhat lengthy letter, but I will address you again in all probability from Norway House.

I remain

Very faithfully yours

E. COLVILE

- Enclosures¹
1. List of Mares &c.
 2. Papers connected with Estate Angus McGillis
 3. Letter from Donald Ross to E. Colvile
 4. Letter enclosing power of Attorney from St. Germain.

Lower Fort Garry 7 *June* 1851²

Sir George Simpson
Lachine

MY DEAR SIR

I enclose herewith copy of a correspondence³ between Mr. Black and Kittson the American Trader at Pembina: I do not feel sure whether it is a subject of sufficient importance to trouble the Committee about, and I therefore send these papers to you with a short account of the circumstances, that you may take such steps in the matter, as you think fit.

It appears that on 27 February, as Cummings and Fidler,⁴ two men in the Company's service, attached to the post of Pembina, were proceeding with a loaded sled on the River Roseau, they were accosted by one Larocque in the service of Mr. Kittson; who asked them if they would not come to his house and smoke a pipe with him. To this they very improperly and foolishly consented, and on reaching the house, two of

¹ These documents are not attached to Colvile's letter.

² D.5/30. This letter is endorsed: "priv. 1851 Fort Garry 7 June Eden Colvile Recd. 11 Septr. Ansd. 10 Novr."

³ This correspondence is not attached.

⁴ Malcolm Cummings and Peter Fidler (B.235/d/121, pp. 96, 101, 105, 109, 110).

Larocque's men laid violent hands on the sled, and were conveying it off to the store. Cummings then laid hold of the tail of the sled to prevent this being done, when Larocque caught up an axe, and said he would break his head if he did not let go of the sled. Cummings eventually did so, and Larocque sent off the sled and goods to Pembina. Among the articles on the sled there was unfortunately a gallon of rum, and, this being discovered, was made the pretext of this unjustifiable seizure. The goods, with the exception of the gallon of rum were all returned by Kittson. I may here remark, that last year when the Company had a post at Lac Roseau, there had been an understanding between John Cummings,¹ who was in charge thereof, and Larocque that the river should be considered as the boundary line in that quarter and the men were proceeding on the river, when they were induced by Larocque, as I have just mentioned to come over to his house. But, even admitting that the men were on American territory I cannot see how the seizure can be justified, as the men were not trading with Indians at the time; the goods were packed on the sled; and for all that appears to the contrary the men might have been on their way to Lac la Pluie, or some other place within the British territory. On the same principle I should think, a cart load of goods might be seized coming from St. Peters, if the party happened to have a flagon of brandy in his travelling case.

I would here add that the instructions to Mr. Setter were on no account to trade spirits with Indians, though occasionally a dram has been given as a gratuity, while Kittsons emissaries have supplied the Indians with rum as far within the British territories as Manitobah and the Touchwood Hills.

Very truly yours
E. COLVILLE

¹ B.235/b/5, fo. 46d., Memorandum from Red River for York Factory, June 17, 1851, John Cummings "was in the first instance intended for Upper Red River District, but having accompanied Mr. C. F. John Ballenden to St. Peter's, he was on his return in December transferred to Mr. C. F. Wm. Sinclair for service in Lac La Pluie District . . .".

Private and Confidential

York Factory 14 July 1851¹

Sir George Simpson
Lachine

MY DEAR SIR

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter to the Governor and Council of the Northern Department, dated Lachine 1 May 1851—to which I think that an official reply may be found in my General Despatch to the Governor and Committee, and the Minutes of Council, and other documents transmitted therewith; and I therefore propose to make some observations under private cover, in which way I can write more freely than I should be inclined to do in a public letter. I also propose to reply to your letter marked *Private* and *Confidential* dated 3 May and to a letter marked *Private* dated 7 May.

Before my departure from Red River I addressed you at some length under Private Cover, on all subjects connected with that place. I had expected to meet Mr. Hargrave at Norway House en route for Sault Ste. Marie; and had I not done so I should have sent my letter by the party proceeding by the plains for St. Peters. But I found on my arrival at this place, that he had received instructions from you to remain here for the meeting of Council, and to proceed to his new charge of Sault Ste. Marie about the middle of this month. He accordingly takes his departure tomorrow in a canoe manned by eight men, and will I trust arrive in due course at the Sault.

Referring to your general letter; you will see by the Minutes of Council that I have been compelled by circumstances unknown to you at the time you prepared the Scheme of appointments to make several important changes in the scheme you proposed. Mr. Ballenden spent two days at Red River, and then accompanied me to this place, where he has rendered me much assistance in preparing the Minutes

¹ D.5/31. This letter is endorsed: "*Confidential* 1851 Yorkfactory 14 July Eden Colville Recd. 24 Sepr. Ansd. Novr."

of Council, and in other ways acting almost as my Secretary. He will return with me to Red River at the end of this week, and spend about a fortnight in the Settlement, and then proceed across the plains to Carlton or Edmonton, where he expects to join the Columbia party. The Saskatchewan Brigade will leave this 16 inst.; and as we shall leave this on 20th Mr. Ballenden will have about 20 days at his disposal at Red River, which will give him ample time to arrange his private affairs there. We have granted C.F. Rae leave of absence, though it is doubtful whether he will return from the coast in sufficient time to take advantage of it. C.T. Anderson will go into McKenzie River District, either in charge of the boats to be sent in with supplies for the expedition, or should they not go in, with the Athabasca Brigade. I have found it absolutely necessary to keep Pelly at Red River for another year, there being no person disposable, who was fit to take charge of the Red River accounts. Andrew Bannatyne has not enough experience and is rather careless, besides which he is going to leave the service next year, to be married to a daughter of McDermot's and I do not think that under those circumstances it is very desirable that he should have charge of the accounts. I have arranged with C.T. McTavish, that young Lockhart should be sent up from this place early in the spring, so as to get an insight into the accounts, and take charge of them next year. I do not know how Ballenden got his information that Mrs. Pelly was to be confined in May, as she produced a fine boy on 23rd Janry. C.T. Todd made his appearance in Red River this spring, having sent his boats off in charge of his son. His state of health was such, he stated, that he had to be carried in and out of the boat, on his way from Swan River. He improved, however, on the journey, but still is manifestly too much shattered ever to be able to resume active service. I got him to give me in writing, what he would consider satisfactory in the way of furlough, previous to retirement; and his request is that he "should have three years leave of absence, and at the expiration of that time be allowed to retire from the service, on the same terms as other Commissioned Gentlemen, unless their Honors should in the

meantime think fit to make him a Chief Factor". We have given him a years leave of absence on the ground of ill health, and as you will see by the General Letter left the other two years to the consideration of the Govr. & Committee. The whole of the gentlemen who were at Council expressed their wish that this should be granted, and if it be refused I think that it should be distinctly understood as a rule, never to be broken for the future, that leave of absence shall not be granted for more than one year, to gentlemen previous to retirement, on the excuse of sickness, length of service, or any pretence whatever, although in that case I think you would have great difficulty in getting rid of the worn out Factors & Traders. Dr. Todd going away made it necessary for me to look out for some person to take the charge of Swan River, which is now the quarter from which the Red River smugglers derive the best portion of their furs. I have therefore appointed C.T. Buchanan to this district, and I hope that the returns will shew that the appointment was a judicious one.

C.F. Ross has been worse than usual all winter, having had a bad attack of influenza in the fall about the time the boats from Red River were passing up; and from this he never seems to have perfectly recovered; his ancles, besides, seem to be failing him, and all the time I was at Norway House, he was hobbling about with a stick, and a white night cap on his head, and never made his appearance at meals. He seemed to consider that if he remained another winter it would be the death of him, and as it was his rotation of furlough, I thought that under the circumstances I could not do otherwise than allow him to pass the winter at Red River. He will be lodged in the little cottage at the Lower Fort, living of course entirely at his own expense; and I shall find him useful in many ways I dare say. This left me with another important charge vacant, and I could see nobody to fill it up but Barnston, and I have accordingly appointed him to that place. I had then nobody left for Athabasca. The only individuals left inland being, young Todd and William Shaw—the former very unwell; and the only person left at my disposal was Deschambault. Your arrangement with Bell prevented me sending him there,

as I suppose it must be considered that Athabasca lies to the Northward of Portage la Loche. Now to have put Athabasca under the real charge of Deschambault would have been ruinous to the district, and I heard such favorable reports of Butcher from Anderson, & others, that I thought it would be absolutely necessary to get him to remain, and I therefore wrote him a letter, copy of which I now enclose, by which you see that I am in a manner bound to do my best that Butcher comes forward the next opportunity, and I trust that in making your arrangements for promotion next year you will bear this in mind. Butcher I have heard since I left Norway House, has made up his mind, on the strength of my letter to return to Athabasca, although his eyesight is in a bad way, having entirely lost the sight of one eye. I trust you will see the necessity I was under of taking this step, and that you will aid me in carrying out the promise I have given. Butcher, therefore, will have virtually, though Deschambault has nominally, the charge of Athabasca for the next outfit; and the arrangement, although, not altogether what I should have wished yet we must hope will turn out well. I have placed Bell at Oxford House, where a man is wanted, who will have more influence with the Indians than L. Robertson,¹ who rose from the ranks, and in the summer will superintend the fur packing stores, and make a report on the returns of the different districts, so as to prevent the shipping of stitched buffalo robes and damaged furs of all sorts. The other arrangements are in accordance with your scheme.

I enclose you copy of depositions² taken by Mr. Peers of the evidence of Hebert dit Manuel, and Neil McKay; by which in my opinion it will be found that there is not sufficient evidence to sustain an Indictment for murder against Hibert. The conduct of McKay appears to have been very good, but he did not see Manuel fire a shot. However, I have written instructions that they be both sent to Portage la Loche next Spring, and I suppose I shall have my orders what to do with them, either from you or the Company, & that I trust by the

¹ Lawrence Robertson, who joined the service as a labourer in 1842.

² These depositions are not attached.

Winter Express. From a letter to your address from Mr. Bell which I opened and now forward, it appears that no further trouble is anticipated as Peers hopes to make a peace offering to the Esquimaux.

I am inclined to think that the conduct of the Red River trippers has been very much exaggerated, but I warned L'Esperance this year before he started that serious consequences would ensue, if such outrages were committed, and he told me he would pay particular attention to the conduct of his men, and report to me those, who misconducted themselves, that they might be punished. I had no commissioned officer, or other to send in charge of the brigade, and to have sent a boy like young Hardisty¹ or Andrew Bannatyne, would be worse than useless. Nicol Finlayson has received instructions to establish a small outpost at the Portage, and to construct carts, & procure oxen from Carlton or Fort Pitt, and I hope will be able to get things in preparation for transporting the pieces next season.

The post at Fond du Lac in Athabasca will be established this year, and I have given directions that other articles be given to the Indians for leather, besides ammunition and the other articles now in use, and I have no doubt that there will be a large encrease from the change.

I am sorry to hear that there is so much prejudice against Catholic missionaries, as I feel bound to say that in my opinion, they are much better fitted for missionaries in this country, than members of the English Church—from their self denial, and the way they accomodate themselves to the circumstances of the country, and my opinion is corroborated by that of every gentleman in the country. I think it is quite out of the question for any one to think of establishing a Church of England Mission in Athabasca or McKenzie's River, as they must have in the first place a wife, and in the second place about two boat loads of goods, provisions and luxuries. As an instance of the moderate way in which the Catholic Missionaries conduct their affairs I may observe that at Isle la Crosse last year the total expenses of the mission

¹ Presumably Richard Hardisty, junior. See p. 261, n. 2.

amounted to £54, while the allowance of flour was limited to one bag per individual connected with the mission. If you will compare this with the expenses of the Pas Mission, and the boat loads of Red River produce, and pemican that are sent there annually I think you will agree with me, that however well fitted Church of England Clergymen may be for Red River, they would never, with our limited means of transport answer for McKenzies River or Athabasca. I suppose everyone, whatever may be their opinion of the Roman Catholic church, will admit that it is better for people to be Roman Catholics, than not to be Christians at all. I must add from my experience in Canada I think that the teaching of Catholic Missionaries has had quite as lasting an effect, as that of any other church. Be all this as it may, I had arranged with the Bishop of North West, before I received your letter, that we would allow two priests lodgings in our establishments, at Fond du Lac & Great Slave Lake, and as it had been done all winter by Mr. Anderson, I do not see how I could have done otherwise.

I hear from Mr. Bell that Mr. Murray's¹ state of health is so bad, as to make it necessary for him to leave the Youcon, and that his place will be supplied by Mr. Hardisty² for the present. I fear we shall have some difficulty in supplying the place of Mr. Murray. We have heard nothing more of Mr. Robert Campbell's wish to have a leave of absence, but I wrote to him telling him for his own sake to waive it *for the present*.

Having heard nothing from the Board of Management this year with respect to Dodd's claim for interest, we have taken no steps in the matter. The person who ought to pay is Mr. Work who misled him, though if Dodd had looked into his Account Current, he should have seen that his money was not at interest. We have passed such a resolve as you mentioned calling attention to the regulations which will be adhered to for the future.

¹ Alexander Hunter Murray. See *H.B.S.*, XVI, 120, n. 1, and 170-1.

² William Lucas Hardisty, a son of Chief Trader Richard Hardisty, joined the Company in 1842. He became a Chief Factor in 1868. See *H.B.S.*, XVI, 125, 170, 171.

We have also passed Resolves respecting the transfer of Columbia & Red River produce, and the allowance to be made to our agents in the Sandwich Islands.

It is very doubtful whether the requisition from the Southern Department can be complied with in full. In fact in the articles of both grease and leather I think it will be impossible to do so, but as much will be shipped, as may be at our disposal. No robes will be sent by the canoes.

I find that it would be almost impossible, and at any rate have a most injurious effect on the trade along the frontier to prohibit entirely the use of liquor in Lac la Pluie and Red River District. Very strict instructions have been given that rum should on no account be made an article of trade with the Indians, and we believe these instructions have been rigidly adhered to. At Lac la Pluie the consumption of rum is limited to a "regale" given to the Indians in the Fall, and to a similar one in the Spring on their return from their wintering grounds. In Red River District, we are forced to employ this article as a means of self preservation, as although Kittson the American trader does not make use of it at his own establishment, yet there is no doubt that the Red River half breeds to whom he makes advances for the purpose of trading with the Indians do use it to a very considerable extent. We shall this winter endeavour to obtain well authenticated statements of this article being employed by Kittson's emissaries, and we shall forward from time to time a report of the information we may receive.

With respect to A. Kennedy's bill, Mr. Ballenden says that he gave Kennedy the bill, and that he will see it paid, but the man being at times out of his mind I do not think a worse subject for establishing a precedent as to recovering costs, and damages could be found, and I think that we should do more harm to our characters by such a proceeding, than ten times the amount of the costs and damages. As you had mentioned in a previous communication the subject of Sir Edward Poore's bill I had already drawn Mr. Black's attention to the subject and I do not think it likely to occur again. It is satisfactory to learn that the amount has been eventually recovered.

I have had no time to look into the subject of the Indian tariffs since the arrival of the canoes, but I shall apply myself to this subject during the winter. My own opinion is that the Indians at present get quite enough on the whole for their furs, though I think it may be desirable to make some alteration in the relative value of the furs, so as to induce them to turn their attention to the hunting of those that fetch the highest price in the market.

As I think that at present we are likely to trade quite as many beaver, as with the supply from the Southern Department, will suffice for the market, we have made no alteration, as to the restrictions on hunting beaver, or the tariff paid to the Indians for this fur.

We shall experience, I think, no inconvenience from the deficiency of men from Canada this season, as the importation last year from the Orkney & Shetland Islands was so unusually large. In fact we are able to send 33 men across to the Columbia, they having applied for 40 to be sent to Vancouver & New Caledonia.

I have done all in my power to further the objects of Count de la Guiche, who is I have no doubt on his way to the Rocky Mountains by this time. The Presbyterian Minister had not made his appearance when I left Red River, but was expected to arrive by the way of St. Peters.

The paragraph of your letter referring to Mr. Jeffrey¹ the botanist has been sent to the Columbia. He crossed the Mountains this spring with C.T. Clouston.

With respect to the goods forwarded from Lachine for Norway House & York Factory I have to remark that the Beaver Caps are quite unsaleable, probably from the price being too high. A few have been sold at Red River, but even there they are not likely to command a ready sale. The silver works also remain for a long while on hand, but I have no doubt that the gentlemen in charge of York Factory & Norway House will address you on this subject.

The bolting cloth for Vancouver will be forwarded

¹ John Jeffrey (1826-54). See Johnstone, "John Jeffrey and the Oregon Expedition", and Harvey, "John Jeffrey Botanical Explorer".

in the packet box for that place, and being soldered up in a tin case is not likely to be damaged in crossing the Mountains.

With respect to the arrangements I made for forwarding the supplies to McKenzies River I have written very fully on the subject to the Governor and Committee to which letter I beg to refer you. Had the canoes arrived in Red River at any thing like the ordinary date we should have had no difficulty in making the arrangements, but as you are well aware it is not easy to get picked men for such a service in Red River on the 16 June. The same cause prevented me from sending across the plains to Carlton, as I was well aware that the Saskatchewan Brigade would have passed that place with every piece of provisions that could be mustered on board their boats. My impression is that Mr. Black will be unable to engage men for this purpose, and if he does from the lowness of the water in the Rivers Maligne and La Loche I think there will be considerable difficulty in getting in their cargo of provisions *intact*. They would have to take a supply from Cumberland to take them to Portage la Loche and back again, as at Isle la Crosse, there is barely a sufficient stock for our own brigades. I have now referred to almost every point in your Public letter, and I will now take up your letter marked *Private & Confidential* under date 3 May.

With respect to my not having written by Pullen's Express, I have to observe that this express was only in Red River 48 hours, that it was requested that it should be forwarded forthwith, that I had written very lately before its arrival, & that no events had occurred in the interim to make it worth while detaining the express for me to write and tell you so.

I have found employment for all the three young men that you sent up by the canoes. Hector A. McKenzie¹ and O'Brien having left the service in McKenzie's River it became necessary to supply their places, and I have accordingly sent in Clarke² &

¹ Hector Æneas Mackenzie. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, XVI, 364-5.

² Lawrence Clarke (1831-90) joined the Company as a postmaster in 1851. He became a Chief Factor in 1875.

Gaudet¹ to supply their places. Neither of whom, by the way, have I had an opportunity of seeing. The other young man Watson² appears likely to be useful in the stores and shops here, besides which he says he has some knowledge of accounts, and altogether I like the looks of him. As they have seen more of the world than most of the young men that join the service I have put them all on the footing of postmasters on a five years contract at £25, telling them, that if found deserving they will hereafter be made clerks. With due deference to your opinion I do not think it very desirable that young men of this class should be made to work their passage up, as it lowers them in the eyes of the men, and in that way renders them less useful—besides which it is I think lowering the young men themselves unnecessarily. Carter who would not be very useful here I think will cross the mountain with Ballenden, who will be able to make some use of him at Vancouver, and who will take care he does not get into bad habits.

I cannot imagine by what process you expected that Foss should be made to disgorge the £300 he got from Pelly; in fact if it could have been done legally, which, as far as I know, it could not; the fellow had spent it all, & was considerably in debt besides; and I would rather have paid something myself than done anything to keep him in Red River either in or out of gaol. I agree with you that Ballenden will be an excellent man for Fort Vancouver, and his health seems in a great measure restored, though I have my doubts whether Ogden will be glad to see him or anyone else coming there to relieve him. I think Ballenden would have got on very well at Red River, there being no party but the clergy against him, but Black certainly does better than I expected, though he is not what I call a first rate man. I do not think he will like to remain another year, and I should be very glad if Hector McKenzie,³

¹ Charles P. Gaudet from Montreal joined the Company as a postmaster in 1851, a year earlier than stated in Gaudet, "Chief Trader Charles Philip Gaudet", p. 45.

² James R. Watson from Montreal, who joined the Company as a postmaster in 1851. He retired to Canada in 1859.

³ Chief Trader Hector McKenzie. See p. 200, n. 1.

who I think the best man for Red River were sent up next year to relieve him. I should think you might easily replace him at Lac des Allumettes.

Thom's plans, as far as I can judge, are to draw £700 a year from the concern as long as he can, at least until his boy Adam the second is old enough to go to school, and I believe there is no office you could give him that he would not accept, provided always that he got the same amount of pay. I note your remark about my conducting the correspondence, and I do not think Black ever writes more than on mere routine business. The distance between the forts, and the pressure upon me generally about the time of the departure of the express make it rather inconvenient to write on these subjects, when one has not the books to refer to. Were the Major out of Red River, & I Governor of Assiniboia, I would live at the Upper Fort, though I like things better as they are as far as I am personally concerned.

I have heard nothing from the Company as to the funds arising from land sales, which would not go very far towards paying the expenses of the settlement, but clearly, as I am to have no official connection with the Colony I should have nothing to say on the matter.

With respect to your observations about itinerant missionaries, I am not aware that any fresh claims have been made for allowances by any of the clergy for this purpose, with the exception of the Bishop's journey to the Pas, which I found placed to a suspense account, and on which subject I have written to the Govr. & Committee for instructions. He talks in his letter to me of going to Moose, God Willing, next year, which will be a tolerably expensive amusement.

We have taken no Half breeds into the service this year. Young McKenzie¹ was taken in last year, & Black, as I wrote you from Red River, went off this spring to the States, to

¹ James McKenzie (b), who was appointed an apprentice postmaster at York Factory in 1850. For an account of his death during the winter of 1859-60 whilst on a journey from Georgetown to Red River see Hargrave, *Red River*, pp. 65-6.

make his own way in the world. I have given strict injunctions with regard to keeping the accounts of the Arctic Searching Expedition, and they will be all forwarded to you, unpriced, as you request. I shall leave the book you sent me which I have looked through in rather a hurried way, to be sent to you in London p. Ship.

I shall arrange the matter respecting Ballenden's furniture after my return to Red River, when I shall be able to get a list and cost price of the same.

In your letter marked *Private* dated 7 May, there is little to reply to as I have already touched upon most of the subjects therein referred to. I am much obliged to you for the trouble you took in sending the portmanteau by the Lakes. The things all arrived safely, and were very acceptable.

I shall forward herewith the recommendations for promotion from the different gentlemen who attended council, and shall forward one to Roderick McKenzie, and request him to send it directly to you. We have given him a year's leave of absence, and I have referred the next year's leave to the Governor & Committee. Your different letters about my own affairs I shall reply to in a different communication as it will be intended for your own perusal alone.

On my arrival at Norway House Lewes informed me that he wished to get a year's leave of absence, to visit Canada, and proceed thence to London, to which place he intended to send his wife & family. He intended to rejoin them there, and take his departure for Vancouver's Island, by the first opportunity. I told him that that matter must be settled in Council at York, but that I thought we should have some difficulty in filling up his place this year, as your understanding with him was that he should go across the Mountains next year. While there, I had determined to appoint Bell to Cumberland; but on my arrival at York Lewes told me that he had made up his mind to remain for this year—and he accordingly returns to Cumberland for this Outfit. He told me today, upon my enquiring what his views for the future were, that he had written to you for three years leave previous to retirement. I informed him, that as he made you his confidant on this

occasion, that I should leave the matter with you; though I was inclined to think the Committee would not allow it. You will, doubtless, communicate with me on the subject in the course of the winter. This three years leave of absence previous to retirement is becoming very inconvenient, and should in my opinion be put a stop to, in some way or another. It seems to be almost considered a right nowadays. They all refer to Archie McDonald,¹ & Colin Robertson,² &c.

The late arrival of the light canoe this year was exceedingly inconvenient, and has caused a good deal of unnecessary hurry and bustle in the business of the Council yet I think the brigades will get off in decent time. The Saskatchewan Brigade takes its departure tomorrow (16 July) and the Cumberland Brigade, which is the only other remaining will be off at the end of this week. I should have been down three days sooner, had it not been for a heavy gale of wind, which detained me at Norway House a couple of days, and kept us back a good deal on our journey down here. The causes of the late arrival of the canoe at Red River, were, as Ballenden informs me, your having given orders that the light canoe should keep with the brigade till they got to the Sault, so that he arrived at that place some three days before the canoes—and in consequence of the crews of the light canoes not being properly arranged at Lachine (Ballenden having been obliged from the number of pieces and passengers luggage, to make two canoes instead of one) he was obliged to keep company with the loaded canoes until he arrived at Fort William, which place he only reached on 30 May. There he had to make some alterations in the crews, and even then he had about as bad a crew as I ever saw in a light canoe, having the Count's two servants, and an Iroquois boy 13 years old among them. It was on the whole as well that I remained at Red River for the arrival of the canoes instead of waiting at Bas de la Rivière from the 1st June, as you recommended me, as the house there was as full as it could hold with old McKenzie's and Anderson's families.

¹ Chief Factor Archibald McDonald. For a biography see *H.B.S.*, X, 253–8.

² See *H.B.S.*, II, cxxviii.

We got through our Council with wonderful smoothness and tolerable rapidity, having commenced on Monday and finished it on Wednesday Evening. I hope you will approve of all that has been done. The greater part of the Resolves are mere routine, but I will make some observations on a few of the concluding resolves, where there is a little novelty to be found. No. 74 regarding storage at York Factory was put in at Hargrave's request, who state that some of the petty traders leave their pieces in store here for one or more years, and I think it fair and reasonable. No. 75 was passed in consequence of young Manson¹ having got goods at Red River, to the amount of £10 although he was already in debt to the amount of more than his years wages. No. 76 was carrying out your ideas of young clerks not getting spirits for the voyage; we give them an extra gallon of wine in lieu thereof. The addition of $\frac{1}{2}$ lb tea and $\frac{1}{4}$ keg of sugar to postmasters was made at the request of several of the gentlemen in charge of Districts, who stated that at present they always made up the deficiency from their own winter allowances, which appeared to me to be a hardship. No. 78 was necessary in consequence of difference of opinion held as to the meaning of a resolve in last years minutes respecting freight; in consequence of which Hargrave charged Revd. Mr. Mason² 12/- per piece for freight & Donald Ross 16/-. I have explained my reasons for No. 82 respecting lands in Red River in my general letter. I will only say here that I have heard more grumbling about the regulation in question than on any one subject during my stay at Red River. No. 84 was carried in spite of very black looks and many grunts from our friend Rowand;³ but Harriott assured me the horses could be procured, and by proper arrangements safely forwarded to Colville, and I am inclined to think that should this experiment succeed, a very profitable trade might be carried on in this way; as the price of horses will be more

¹ William Manson, son of Chief Trader Donald Manson. He had joined the Company as an apprentice clerk in 1848.

² The Reverend William Mason, the Wesleyan missionary at Rossville. See MacLeod, *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*, pp. 176-7.

³ Chief Factor John Rowand.

likely to rise in the Columbia than fall. I have written stringently to Manson¹ & Anderson to take care of these horses, as we cannot promise them a regular supply by this route. No. 85 was considered necessary, as the existing regulation of 11 pieces per man to each boat as a minimum was a dead letter owing to the physical impossibility of putting 88 pieces in addition to servants orders into a boat. The number of pieces now voted is generally considered practicable, and I shall see that it is rigidly adhered to.

I am very glad to say that from all I can learn Harriott has been very steady, and his appearance confirms the information I have received. His health is good, and I have found him of great use in giving me information on all subjects connected with the Saskatchewan. He does not seem to like his position very much, playing second fiddle to Rowand, who is very impracticable. I found his requisition most enormous, he having applied for £3700 of outfit, in face of an inventory of about £2300—besides which it is said that Rowand has all sorts of things stowed away en cache in the big house at Edmonton that do not appear on inventory at all. He does not seem to have the least intention of retiring, though I think it would be almost as well for the concern, if he should do so, as he has got all the old ideas of the times of the North West, whereas circumstances have changed considerably since those days. If Harriott would remain steady, which I am in hopes he will do, I think he would be much better in charge of the Saskatchewan, as he seems to be remarkably *au fait* to all the details of the business, and can always give one an intelligible answer to any question put to him. At the same time I should be sorry to turn out old Rowand; though perhaps this visit to Red River may put it into his head to retire to that place.

Both Hargrave & McTavish speak highly of young Wm. Christie, and think that he is quite thrown away at Churchill, and wish him to be placed in some more important charge. I think that he would do well at Cumberland, next year, when Lewis leaves that charge.

¹ Chief Trader Donald Manson who was in charge of the New Caledonia District. See *H.B.S.*, XVIII, 222-41.

Young William Manson has been exceedingly extravagant and last winter got into a scrape with Mainville,¹ the interpreter's daughter. He has managed to get in debt to the amount of £50, and Sinclair seemed to wish to get rid of him. I have accordingly sent him across the Mountains, and think he might be usefully employed on the North West coast, as he is a stout active lad physically and I believe not deficient in abilities.

Harriott hinted to me that he thought it would be better for the lad himself, to remove James Simpson² from the Saskatchewan, as he was rather too much given to horses & dogs. I had no place vacant for him this year, but I shall be glad to hear your views on this matter before removing him.

Père Taché a priest will get a passage in my canoe to Canada. He has been appointed Coadjutor Bishop to our fat friend³ at Red River, and proceeds to Canada to be consecrated. I do not know of any other passengers going to Canada and I told Wm. Sinclair he might put Mrs. Ermatinger⁴ on board any canoe that was at liberty—as it passed Lac la Pluie.

I do not see that I can do anything more by remaining here till the arrival of the ship, and shall accordingly return to Red River forthwith, where my presence may be more required. I think I have given you full particulars of all my proceedings, so I will now conclude

I remain, My dear Sir,
Very truly Yours
E. COLVILLE

P.S. On second thoughts I have sent the copy of depositions of Manuel & McKay to Mr. Finlayson, as I think he might

¹ François Mainville, interpreter in the Lac la Pluie District (B.239/1/20-22).

² A son of Sir George Simpson by "A Half Caste Woman" (E.4/1^a, fo. 80) and brother to John and George Simpson, junior (D.5/10, fo. 50). Prior to his entry into the Company's service as an apprentice postmaster in 1844, James Simpson, who was "continually in a bad state of health" (ibid.), had been under the guardianship of Dr. Tolmie at Fort Nisqually (D.5/9, fo. 236-236d.).

³ Bishop Provencher. See Introduction, p. xvi, n. 2.

⁴ Catherine, a daughter of Chief Factor William Sinclair, and wife of Chief Trader Francis Ermatinger. See *H.B.S.*, II, 213.

like to show them to Mr. Rose.¹ I have sent another copy to London, so that if you have left Lachine you will see them there.

E. C.

Private

Y^r 14 July 1851²

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

I left a very long letter for you at Norway House with a full account of Red River affairs, which I took there expecting to meet Hargrave on his way to Canada. When I got here, however, I found he had acted on some instructions from you desiring him to remain here for the Council, & to take his departure about the middle of this month. This he will do tomorrow, being as near the middle as he can make it, & I am just going to send you down by him all the private letters to your address from the Cola. & elsewhere, which I have taken the liberty of perusing, in order to see if I could acquire any information that were not in letters addressed to me. I hope I did right. I have got letters from you of all shapes, sizes handwritings &c. to reply to, but I must do that by the next opportunity—which will be in about a week. I got through the counselling business very smoothly indeed in three days. I have written my general letter of about fifty pages foolscap to the Govr. & Committee, and I have succeeded in obtaining nominations for your men for Factors & Traders from all within reach with the exception of Lewes, & he has named two out of the number. The Saskatchewan brigade will be off tomorrow. Nicol Finlayson has already started, as have the

¹ Presumably John Rose (later Sir John Rose, Bart.) who was called to the bar of Lower Canada in 1842. See Wallace, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, II, 572-3.

² D.5/31. This letter is addressed: "*Private* Sir George Simpson Hudson's Bay House Lachine Canada East *To be forwarded*"; and is endorsed: "*priv.* 1851 York factory 14 July Eden Colville Recd. 11 Sept. Ansd. 10 Novr."

Swan River Boats, & Lewes with the Cumberland Brigade has done his packing, & has only to get his men equipped. I have finished all my letters to the Columbia—and the rest of this week I shall devote to writing to you & to my folk at home. The recommendations for promotion I will send down by the next opportunity—I have them from Hargrave, Donald Ross, Rowand, Harriott, Sinclair, Nicol Finlayson & Lewes—besides one from myself. The returns this year, particularly Martens, will be good. Cats are extinct or nearly so—but all other furs are on the increase, so far as we have heard. Anderson has increased the returns from Athabasca from £5349 to £8789. I suppose that this letter will hardly catch you at Lachine, but you have no doubt ordered all letters addressed to you to be forwarded to London. As I have gone, I think too minutely, into the affairs of the country in my general despatch, I do not think it necessary to answer your letter to the Governor & Council officially—but I shall give you a long screed, under Private Cover, which will I think answer your purpose better. Ballenden returns to Red River to settle his affairs, and Rowand will go with him, as he wants to send his daughters to the nuns, who have started a school; & the two will proceed across the plains to Carlton to meet the Saskatchewan Brigade. As I shall have done all my work by the end of the week I shall accompany them to Red River, as I think, as long as there is such a fool as the Major at the head of affairs, my presence is more required there than here, where I should not have much to do, or much to see till the ship came in. Ballenden is bothered to know what to do with his wife, but I am inclined to think he will find that she has saved him all trouble on that head by taking herself off before he returns. You may expect to hear from me again in about ten days.

Ever Yrs. Sincerely

E. COLVILE

Private

Lower Fort Garry 10 August 1851¹

Sir George Simpson
Hudson's Bay House
London

MY DEAR SIR

Referring you to various communications I addressed to you from York Factory I have now to acknowledge the receipt of your letters from Moose Factory 2 June, and from Sault Ste. Marie 16 June.

I arrived here after an exceedingly stormy passage through Lake Winnipeg yesterday afternoon, having been upwards of ten days in coming from Norway House. The Indian² you sent from the Southern Department will proceed under the charge of C.F. Harriott to Edmonton, & will then be placed under the charge of C.F. Ballenden. You do not say what is to be done with him, when he gets to his destination, whether he is to be set at liberty, or kept at the Fort, but I suppose you will give the necessary instructions to the Board of Management, direct from London.

No necessity exists for a new schooner at York Factory, as the craft they have there is amply sufficient to do all the work so that I do not think you need carry out the proposed arrangements for sending the *Lady Frances* from Moose.

I am very sorry to hear of the loss of your guide,³ as he was a good decent man, and guides appear to be getting scarce nowadays. I have received the Minutes of Council from the Southern Department, but sincerely trust that no such arrangements are in contemplation with regard to the importations of spirits for the Northern Department, as I

¹ D.5/31. This letter is endorsed: "*priv.* 1851 Red River 10 August Eden Colville Recd. 24 Sepr. Ansd. 10 Novr."

² This Indian had attempted to assassinate Donald Grant, postmaster in charge of the Flying Post in the Kenogamissi District. By way of punishment and as a warning to other Indians, the culprit had been removed to the Northern Department of Rupert's Land, "so far distant from his country and friends" that they would be unlikely to hear anything of him again (D.4/72, fos. 12d.-13).

³ Jean Baptiste Bernard.

consider it would lead to very serious disturbances in some of the districts, say Lac la Pluie, Red River, and Saskatchewan, but you ought to know more about this than I do.

I left your memoranda on the Indian Tariffs with Donald Ross at Norway House, and desired him to forward it to your address per York Ship. The Admiralty account book I left at York, & that also will be forwarded to London.

Buchanan arrived at this place on 27 ulto. and Black has for some very wise reason doubtless kept the canoe waiting for my arrival. I shall send all the three canoes off on 13 instant, the only passengers being Taché a priest from Isle a la Crosse, who is to be the future Bishop of North West, and a son of Revd. Peter Jacobs, who is such a scamp that the Bishop can do nothing with him.

Donald Ross remains at Norway House till all the Red River boats have passed down, & will then come to the settlement, & will occupy the small house at this place, living at his own expense.

Buchanan proceeds to Swan River on Tuesday next, and seems well pleased with the appointment. I think, on looking over the arrangements, I have done the best in my power, though Athabasca is not so well manned as I could wish.

Ballenden is sadly bothered to know what to do with his unfortunate wife, who has confessed her guilt to him, and thrown herself on his mercy. I shall write you at length on this and other subjects by the Fall canoe from Y^r which was to leave not later than 15 August.

I enclose copy of my letter to Boucher, which I omitted to do in my other letter to you.

The crops here, I understand, look remarkably well though they have had an unusual quantity of rain. From the time I left this till I returned I only had one wet day and two thunder showers.

The boats with the supplies for the Admiralty Expedition left Norway House under the charge of C.T. Anderson on 9 July and on 15 July were at Cross Lake (Lac Travers). Anderson complains bitterly of the crews, which are very

inefficient. Black might have got better men, had he followed my instructions, and offered higher wages.

Mrs. Colvile appears all the better for her voyage to York and begs to join me in kind regards to Lady Simpson & yourself.

I remain

Very truly Yours

E. COLVILE

P.S. Ballenden desires me to say that he will not write to you till he gets to Vancouver.

*Copy*¹

Private

Norway House 25th June 1851

Francis Boucher Esquire

En Route

MY DEAR SIR

By a public letter I addressed to you from Red River, you will see that your wish to revisit the civilized world could only be effected by allowing you to retire from the Service, with an understanding that you should be readmitted at the expiry of a year with the same emoluments, and my view of the case is borne out by the General Letter of the Governor and Committee who recommend that this course be pursued. You are accordingly at liberty to proceed to Canada or England this summer if you are still so inclined; but I hope to be able to induce you to retrace your steps to Athabasca.

It was intended that Mr. C.F. Barnston should be appointed to the charge of Athabasca, but as, from severe indisposition, Mr. C.F. Ross is unable to remain on active duty, Mr. Barnston will be appointed to this place; and the only Commissioned Gentleman that I have disposable for the very important District of Athabasca is Mr. C.T. George Deschambeault.

As this gentleman has had no experience in that District

¹ This enclosure is in a clerk's writing.

and is, I believe, far from a good Accountant, should you insist on coming out, I am apprehensive that a very serious derangement of the business will ensue, and the consequences will, in all probability, be felt for some years.

Under these circumstances I venture to hope that you will see fit to return to Athabasca; and, acting under this impression, I shall appoint you to the charge of Fort Chipewyan, sending Mr. Deschambeault to Fort Vermilion and William Shaw to Dunvegan. I shall also instruct Mr. Deschambeault that you come out with the Brigade next Summer to this place.

You are well aware that I can make no promise as to promotions; but I can only say that should you forego your visit to the civilized world for the sake of preventing a serious derangement to the business of the concern, I shall individually consider that you will have established a very strong claim, in addition to your length of service, to promotion; and I shall use all my influence to advance your interests at the earliest possible date. And to this end I shall send a copy of this letter to Sir George Simpson.

I am My dear Sir

Yours very truly

(signed) E. COLVILLE

Private

Lower Fort Garry 24 *August* 185[1]¹

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

As we may soon be expecting the arrival of the Fall canoe from York Factory, which was to leave no later than

¹ D.5/31. This letter is addressed: "*Private* Sir George Simpson Hudson's Bay House Fenchurch Street London" and bears the signature "E Colville" in the bottom left-hand corner. The remark "Try Lachine" is added in different writing. The letter also bears the following postmarks: (black, circular), "Sault Ste. Marie C.W Oc 10 1851"; (red, circular), "Orillia, C.W Oc 19 1851"; (red, circular), "Montreal L.C Oc 24 1851"; and (red, circular), "Lachine C.E Oc 24 1851". The letter is endorsed: "*priv.* 1851 Red River 24 August Eden Colville Recd. 24 Octr. Ansd. 10 Novr."

15 inst. and come on direct to this place; I shall trouble you with a few lines, though I fear I have not much of interest to communicate.

The settlement is unusually quiet; the Major appears quite subdued, and with the exception of the skirmishes between the plain hunters & the Sioux there is really no topic of conversation. Ballenden & Rowand took their departure from the Settlement on 20 inst. and I hope will be in ample time to catch the Columbia party at Edmonton; though I understand that plains are very wet, and that they may be delayed by the bad state of the roads. He has left Mrs. B. behind him, having rented Philip Kennedy's house at the Rapids for £10 per annum; besides which he allows her £60 per annum; which is I think on the whole, more than she deserves. However it seemed a great relief to him to have left her tolerably comfortable; and he went off in tolerable spirits. I was somewhat at a loss to know what to do touching the expenses of his journey to Edmonton. Had he remained here instead of coming on to York as he did at my request, he might have settled his affairs, and found his way to Norway House in time to meet the Saskatchewan Brigade. Under these circumstances I hardly thought it just that the expenses of his trip from here to Edmonton should be charged to his Private Account, and I have in the meantime placed it to General Charges, with the understanding that should you be of a different opinion it would be transferred to his Private Account. I found him exceedingly useful at York, where in fact he acted as my Secretary, & I should be sorry that he should be out of pocket by his coming there, though he certainly improved in health from his trip, as he was so constantly annoyed and bothered while he remained here, that I think he would have broken down altogether, had he not come with me. I cannot make out what old Rowand will do. He grumbled exceedingly at Red River people, said that they were nothing but a pack of beggars—and so forth. I think he will be an unhappy creature, whenever he leaves Edmonton. The mere act of paying for anything he wants seems to make him wretched. He grumbled fearfully at having to pay £18 for a horse to take

him hence; but as he came to the settlement for his own good pleasure I of course did not offer to relieve him of the payment.

One Donald McDonald who lives down in this neighbourhood, and who was an old Saskatchewan steersman I think, lays claim to 100 acres of land on the strength of a promise from the late Lord Selkirk. He states that he has lost the agreement that he made with Lord Selkirk, but that Archie McDonald was cognisant of the fact. He states that on several occasions he has applied to you on the subject, but that you always put him off without giving him any decided answer. I told him that the presumption was, that had the claim been good, it would have been settled long ago; but that I would write to you on the subject and give him his answer Aye or No in due course. I may mention that I believe me the man to be quite honest and very industrious.

While on the subject of land I wish to draw your attention to the reserve round this establishment, which appears to be needlessly large as the land for one mile in breadth on each side of the Fort is lying waste. I have repeatedly been applied to for a lot of land on this reserve by John Gunn the son of Donald Gunn the schoolmaster at the Rapids Church; but I have not ventured to dispose of any to him, as I understood that you were anxious for some reason or another to keep this land in the Company's hands. It seems to me, however, that one half of this land on either side might safely be disposed of without crowding us down here inconveniently. I would divide the portion sold into small lots, selling them merely to respectable people, tradesmen or others, and for Cash. The last applicant for a lot here is old Roderick McKenzie, who made an application to me in the Spring to be allowed to settle at Norway House, which all his friends seemed to think would be a very foolish thing, and as you had refused a similar application from him, I told him I could not allow it; the other day I got a letter from him stating his intention of coming to the settlement next summer and begging me to give him a lot of land between John Cox's lot and the Lower Fort. I hope therefore you will give me permission to dispose of one half of this reserve, as I think I could select a few useful

tradesmen which might be convenient for any work we wanted done at the Fort.

This English horse and bull are about as bad a speculation as the Company ever engaged in; and I do not think either of them pay for their keep. The settlers have sent just 17 mares to the horse, though the price of him was reduced to one pound with a shilling to the groom. He covered about 60 mares belonging to the Company, but they were so wild, never having been handled, that I understand more than half of them are not in foal. The bull has had just 14 cows, and the settlers now say that he ought to be turned loose in the plains, for they do not understand paying 5/- for him. In fact it is ridiculous attempting anything of this sort for the benefit of these people. You do not even get thanked for it. My opinion is that the horse should be sent next season to St. Louis, and sold for what he will fetch, and I think a good price may be obtained for him. You may take my word for it we shall never make a fortune by breeding horses in this country; and the sooner the establishment kept up at Manitobah Lake for the brood mares is done away with the better for it is just a waste of money.

We got rid of a mad pensioner, Marten, this season, and also the husband of a mad wife, Ashford.¹ The said Mrs. Ashford amused herself just before her departure with breaking 103 panes of glass in the Bishop's house, by way, as she said, of throwing a light on the subject. Two or three other pensioners, and those the most troublesome among them, have made application through Major Caldwell to be sent home, and I sincerely trust that their wishes may be complied with. They keep Black, who is the sole magistrate up above, now that old Ross has resigned, in constant turmoil, and they are almost the only cases we have at the General Courts. It would be a happy day for the settlement, if they all marched out of it in a body, for I think they will gradually demoralise

¹ William Martin, formerly a sergeant in the 69th Regiment of Foot, and James Ashford formerly a private in the Newfoundland Companies. They both came to Red River with the first draft of pensioners in 1848. See Martin, *Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures*, p. 203.

the inhabitants. The Major says that he can do nothing without three other officers, so as to hold a Court Martial; and I trust that the Committee will not think of giving us any more of these cattle.

Should the price of beaver continue rising, I think we are safe to have a tolerably hot opposition, and in my opinion the only effectual way of putting a stop to this is for the Company to authorise me to issue a proclamation stating that any person joining in the illicit traffic of furs need not expect to have any goods brought out by the Company's ships. It seems monstrous that we should be bringing out goods for these people to oppose us with. Narcisse Marion & Thibaut were the two greatest offenders in this way last year, but I understand that McDermot says that as no notice has been taken of these two, he shall go into the business this year & make advances of goods to be repaid in furs. As for putting a stop to this by law we have tried it already ineffectually and the only course we can pursue is what I have suggested. I shall write by this opportunity to Sir J. Pelly under private cover on this subject, and trust that he & you may take the same view of the matter as I do. McDermot has taken as a partner young Bannatyne; Ballenden's nephew, who has married one of McDermot's daughters. I do not think this youth will be a very formidable opponent. I wish when you get hold of Red River news you would let me know your informant—you say that Mrs. Pelly's state of health would have prevented her going across the mountains. The young woman is as strong as a horse, and has been ever since the month of March when she recovered from her confinement. I hope the Pellys may be able to go across the Mountains next year, as they express themselves disappointed at not having been able to go this season. Black says he most decidedly wants to go home next season. I hope you may be able to spare Hector McKenzie from the Southern Department as he is in my opinion the person best fitted, with the exception of Ballenden, for this charge. I got the other day, a desponding letter from our friend Nicol Finlayson, who says he is so unwell, that if he lives till next summer he must apply for leave of absence, and

that he should have done so this year, had it not been for the crippled state of the districts.

31 *August*. A boat arrived today from Lac la Pluie, bringing me duplicate of Mr. Barclay's letter p. Ship, and some newspapers, but no other letters from Canada or England. I must defer answering Mr. Barclay's letter, which contains nothing of pressing importance till another opportunity, which I shall probably have in about three weeks. I fear the resolution of the Committee reducing the Interest on deposits will not be very popular—though it is certainly very reasonable. I got a letter from Roderick McKenzie about his lot. He says that you apprehend he would find less difficulty in procuring a lot in the neighbourhood of the Stone Fort than anywhere in the Upper part of the settlement. Now with the exception of the reserve there is not an acre of surveyed land to be disposed of in the neighbourhood; but I will wait till I hear from you on the subject. I should mention that if he gets a lot of land in the reserve I should feel bound to give John Gunn one also.

I hope you and all your family are by this time comfortably settled in London or its neighbourhood and that you found all well on your return from Moose. Mrs. Colville unites with me in kind regards to Lady Simpson & yourself.

Believe me

Very sincerely yours

E. COLVILLE

Private

Lower Fort Garry 17 *Decr.* 1851¹

Sir George Simpson
London

MY DEAR SIR

Events are so scarce with us that I have really very little

¹ D.5/32. This letter is addressed: "*Private* Sir George Simpson Hudson's Bay House Fenchurch Street London", and is endorsed: "*priv.* 1851 Red River 17 December Eden Colville Recd. 18 Feb. '52 Ansd. 1 May".

to write about by this opportunity. Our friend Donald Ross is living very comfortably in the little cottage outside the fort. He got a severe attack of the influenza just before the snow fell, from which he has never entirely recovered; and his stomach is much deranged, so that he can keep very little on it; but he keeps pretty stout and fluid, though he seldom puts foot over the doorstep. He tells me that he has no intention of resuming active service, and intends to settle at Red River in the neighbourhood of this establishment, if possible. I hope I may have authority from you next summer to dispose of a portion of the reserve above and below the fort to respectable settlers. Both Donald Ross, and old Roderick McKenzie would take lots here if they could get them. The former intends to beg for two years leave of absence previous to retiring. I suppose I shall have some instructions on this matter by the General Letter; as I wrote on the subject from York Factory. Dr. Todd has established himself on the Assiniboine about five miles above the Upper Fort, and is not likely to live much longer I fear. I understand that he is addicted to opium eating and last week was hardly expected to live, but he has since in some measure recovered. Of course he can never return to active service. I received a letter from Nicol Finlayson en route to Isle a la Crosse in which he states that his health is so miserably bad that he is under the necessity of applying for leave of absence next year—and I am inclined to think his services will never again be available. I have heard nothing decisive as to Lewes' movements, but I rather think he will wish to hold on to the concern as long as he can. Black has made his arrangements to take his furlough next outfit, and I hope you will be able to send up some one to replace him. The man I should like to see here would be Hector McKenzie, and if he cannot be spared, I do not know how Black's place is to be supplied. I heard such a good account of Wm. Christie from both Hargrave & McTavish, that I think he will be fitted for a more important charge than Churchill, and I have an idea that he would do as well as Nicol Finlayson in Isle la Crosse. He ought to have sufficient experience to manage that district by

this time. In Athabasca it will be necessary to place somebody of more intellect than George Deschambeault, though I do not see my way at present towards effecting this. I suppose old Rowand will hang on for a while yet, and that the Saskatchewan will remain as it is. Young John Rowand¹ appears to have been very uncivil to Count la Guiche, and I have sent him under private cover a jobation on the subject. With all others in the country the Count appears well satisfied, and he seems very well pleased with his reception generally. Here, with the exception of ecclesiastical squabbles, everything is as quiet as possible, and I think will continue so, as long as Thom does not make his appearance in Court; and I believe the Court gets on just as well without him. We have spent all our money on roads & Bridges, and a foolish grant for education, carried by the preponderating element of the clergy in the Council. The Scotch are putting in a claim for a share of this, and I think ought to have it, and then have done with it. I hope the Governor and Committee will make a few more lay Counsellors, for these ecclesiastics have too much of their own way here. I shall be very anxious to receive the decision of the Committee on the Upper church burying ground, on which I have addressed you under a separate cover. I shall again address you this winter by Dr. Rae.

I remain

Very truly yours

E. COLVILLE

¹ Chief Trader John Rowand in charge at Fort Pitt. He was a son of Chief Factor John Rowand (see p. 130).

*Private and Confidential*Lower Fort Garry 17 Decr. 1851¹

Sir George Simpson
Hudson's Bay House
London

MY DEAR SIR

I write about the affairs of the country in general under a different cover, but my present object is to direct your attention to my correspondence with the Bishop of Rupert's Land on the subject of the Upper Church Land. You will see from it that His Lordship and I are at issue on a question of fact. He states that he continually to myself and others asserted his intention of consecrating the burying ground as soon as he received the conveyance of the land; I as positively affirm that the first I heard of such intention was four days after I had completed the negotiation with the Presbyterians on the terms of my letter to Mr. A. Ross, which terms, including the reservation of the burying ground, were expressly consented to by the Bishop. As I had no expectation of our agreeing on this point, I have determined to lay the correspondence before the Governor and Committee. In my letter to Sir J. H. Pelly on the subject I only mention the probable consequences of the Bishop's proposed course with reference to the peace of the settlement, but to you I wish to say that should Their Honors make the conveyance without the reservation in question it will appear to me and others that they consider the Bishop's assertions as more worthy of belief than mine, and thereby place me in an exceedingly disagreeable position. My own opinion of the Bishop is that, he not only never thinks of what he is going to say, but that he is utterly incapable of remembering what he has said. In his letter he talks of having informed Robert McBeath of his intention in this business; but on referring to that individual, he told me

¹ D.5/32. This letter is addressed: "*Private* Sir George Simpson Hudson's Bay House Fenchurch Street London", and is endorsed: "*priv. & Conf.* 1851 Red River 17 December Eden Colville Recd. 18 Feb. '52 Ansd. 1 May Burying ground at Upper Church".

that the Bishop in his conversation with him expressed himself directly differently—namely, that his intention was to build his new church on a different site, adjoining the present one, with a fence between the new churchyard (to be consecrated) and the present one, that was to be left, in accordance with my understanding with the Presbyterians as it has always been. The fact is, that since the arrival of the Presbyterian Minister, and the consequent secession of almost the whole of his congregation, the Bishop has been acting in a way that clearly shews that he feels this secession as a personal insult to himself. He has, for instance, set up a system of exclusive dealing, refusing to buy his beef, butter &c. from the Presbyterians. This is a futile proceeding on his part, as you are well aware that it frequently happens here that it is a favour to sell—the demand being always equal to the supply; and should a failure take place in the crops, His Lordship will be very glad to buy from these very people, who are the only class in the settlement, who are sufficiently provident to keep a reserve in hand. However, with all this I have no concern, except that I am sorry to see the Bishop making himself ridiculous, but I must protest against him or anybody else making me their agent to complete a negotiation and then endeavour by quibbling to escape complying with the conditions on which alone these people gave up their claims to the land. It is unnecessary for me to go through the whole of his letter, but I wish to touch upon one or two points. He says that the burying ground is clearly an Episcopalian one. Now I am told, and I daresay you are aware of the fact, that the Scotch settlers buried their dead in that spot, five or six years before there was either Church or clergyman in Red River. That in consequence of their having done so Lord Selkirk induced two of the McBeaths to give up their lots and take others, as he wished to reserve them for a church and school—I have no doubt in my own mind, a Presbyterian Church and School. How he is acquainted with the sympathies of the vast majority of the 447 interred therein I am at a loss to conceive. Nor do I know what he means, when he talks of a “ Church but no Churchyard, a Cathedral but not a foot

of ground around it", when the Church lots consist of upwards of 320 acres of land, from which the present burying ground comprising 2 or 3 acres, is alone proposed to be reserved.

I do most sincerely trust that the Committee will not make the Conveyance without making this reservation; but reserved or not reserved, consecrated or not consecrated, my conviction is that the Scotchmen will continue to bury their dead therein in their own way, unless his Lordship can muster a sufficient number of half breeds to prevent them from so doing by force of arms. I, for one, have no wish to see a war of races, particularly on such a subject—but you may take my word for it, that should the Bishop carry out his intentions, to that it will come.

I remain, My dear Sir,
Yours very truly
E. COLVILE

Private

Lower Fort Garry 22 Dec. '51¹

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

Your letter dated Lachine 9 Septr. came to hand this moment being the first fruits of the American Mail from St. Paul's, which it appears is to run every alternate month.

For the delay in the reception of letters you are in some measure to blame yourself. You wrote to me informing me that Hargrave had received instructions to leave **Y** by first open water, and I fully expected to meet him at Norway House. I considered that he would take letters nearly as quickly, & much more surely than the party that proceeded by the plains—and accordingly took my letters with me to Norway House. It appears however, that you had written Hargrave, directing him to remain at **Y** for the Council. I hope you got enough of letters at last. I have written to you two letters already by

¹ D.5/32. This letter is endorsed: "*priv.* 1851 Red River 22 December Eden Colville Recd. 18 Feb. 52 Ansd. 1 May".

this opportunity (Count de la Guiche). That Gentleman postpones his departure till Wednesday which has enabled me to acknowledge your letter.

The only event that has occurred here since I closed my packet, is the death of Dr. Todd. He died this morning, I understand. Will you be pleased to notify this to the Company, as it is hardly worth while my troubling them with another letter to announce this fact, and I have written all I had to say already.

I am exceedingly sorry to hear of the reason of your not being able to cross the Atlantic this fall, but trust that ere this Lady Simpson's health may be reestablished and that she will be able to accompany you in the Spring.

The presbyterians seem to expect nothing more from the Company than the lot of land, & £150, which they have already received, in consideration of giving up their claims to the Upper Church lots. Mr. Black¹ seems a very judicious painstaking parson, & never attempts to meddle in secular affairs. I only wish there had never been any other than papists and Presbyterian parsons in the country, for those of our church are the most intolerable meddlers and idiots I ever had anything to do with. Hunter,² D. Ross' son in law, is the only exception I have to make.

By the way since I closed my letter I have heard from Sinclair at Lac la Pluie. It appears that Kittson has withdrawn his posts in that quarter entirely—and has gone himself to St. Paul's as representative—leaving merely a Canadian in

¹ See Introduction, p. cx, n. 4.

² D.5/32, A. Thom to Sir G. Simpson, dated Red River Settlement, December 15, 1851, "Mr. Hunter cant be made to wear the episcopal collar on any terms. He has positively declined, the 'Christian' Bishop's special request notwithstanding, to withdraw his freight from his wife's uncle Robert, as being no longer 'one of us'; and the burden of one of his sermons—the pervading principle, I am told, of them all—was the audacious heresy, that the essentials of christianity are more important than its trappings. In addition to such deliberate disobedience, which clearly, if he had the spirit of a flunkey, he could have avoided, Mr. Hunter commits the almost inevitable enormity of preaching better than his neighbours—an enormity which is heavily felt, in the shape of empty pews, by that ighly heduated [sic] individual Mr. Chaplain Chapman . . .".

charge at Pembina. There are no rabbits in this quarter but martens wolves & foxes are plentiful.

Mrs. Colvile begs to join with me in very kind regards to Lady Simpson & yourself.

Believe me

Yrs. very sincerely

E. COLVILLE

P.S. I am at a loss to know what you [mean] by saying that Ross and his party have worked secretly in the matter of parson Black. A passage was granted, as I understand, in the canoes for one from Canada, but he was not forthcoming in time, and the synod or Presbytery or whatever they call the managing body sent this man across the plains instead. I believe he is only to remain the year here till another, the original man, replaces him. I only hope this one may be as quiet and peaceable as Mr. Black.

E. C.

Private

Lower Fort Garry
29 Decr. 1851¹

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

The Count has not yet taken his departure with all our letters, and will not start till the day after tomorrow. This gives me an opportunity of more last words. I suppose that the vacancy caused by Dr. Todd's death will be filled up at once, without waiting for recommendations from the Chief Factors. I hope if you have any say in the matter, you will not forget that I feel bound to use all my exertions in favour of Butcher, and I trust that you may recommend him for promotion. Upon second thoughts I have determined to acquaint the Committee directly of Dr. Todd's decease, but of course I shall not allude at all to the subject of supplying the vacancy.

¹ D.5/32. This letter is endorsed: "*priv.* 1851 Red River 29 Decr. Eden Colvile Recd. 18 Feb. '52 Ansd. 1 May".

Todd has left a will¹ in which he names me and Smith² of the H.B. House as his executors. He leaves £200 to his sister in Canada £50 to his niece, £100 to each of his three elder children. The interest of £400 to his wife, and the remainder to be divided equally among his seven younger children.

We have accounts from Manitobah by which it appears that trade is better than last year, and that there are very few petty traders in that quarter. There is nothing stirring in the settlement, so once more with kind regards to all your family

I remain

Very truly yours

E. COLVILLE

Private

Lower Fort Garry 28 *Jany.* 1851-[1852]³

Sir George Simpson
Lachine

MY DEAR SIR

I addressed you so lately by Count de la Guiche, that I shall have little to communicate by this opportunity. Dr. Rae arrived here on 11 inst. having walked from Athabasca, and

¹ D.4/73, fo. 65d., Sir G. Simpson to John Black, dated Lachine, May 1, 1852, "I notice that you think Dr. Todds will is irregular & may lead to difficulty in winding up his Estate. The apportionment of his means among his children of his first & second family seems rather capricious".

² William Gregory Smith, assistant secretary to the Governor and Committee, and son of the William Smith referred to in n. 2, p. 131.

³ D.5/33. This letter is addressed: "Sir George Simpson Hudson's Bay House Lachine Canada East". It bears the following postmarks: (black), "U.S."; (red), "U.States"; (black, circular), "6^d"; (black, circular), "New-York Mar 9 10Cts"; (red, circular), "Montreal L.C MR 11 1852"; and (red, circular), "Lachine C.E MR 12 1852". There is a tear near the seal and the following remark in pencil has been added: "Torn accidentally but not opened J. Rae". The letter is endorsed: "*priv.* 1852 Red River 28 January Eden Colville Recd. 12 March Ansd. 1 May".

will proceed across the plains to St. Paul's, as soon as he has got his dog harness &c. arranged. He proposes to proceed direct to England to make his report in person, so that it is not probable that you will see him at Lachine, but I shall direct him to write you an account of his proceedings from New York, as I dare say he will be able to give you a more lucid account thereof than I can do. He brings with him a part of a stanchion evidently belonging to some vessel which he picked up on his return to the mainland on the coast of Wollaston or Victoria Land, which appear to be identical, as he found no strait between the two.

He missed James Anderson somewhere in the McKenzie River, so that I have no later tidings of his progress than Portage la Loche, and I have no letters whatever from McKenzie River District. I have much satisfaction in stating however, that Campbell has ascertained the identity of the Pelly and Youcon Rivers—having descended from Fort Selkirk to the Youcon in 3 days. There is no Portage between the two establishments, and he estimates that the voyage up in loaded craft would not take more than 14 days. He has, accordingly taken in his outfit this season by the way of Peels River, and the route by the way of Frances Lake, together with the outpost there is abandonned. Dr. Rae reports favorably on the prospects of the trade of McKenzie River District. Rabbits are returning and Martens were very numerous.

I have advices from Fort Chipewyan to 21 Novr. but there is nothing of interest in the communications from that quarter. Nicol Finlayson writes to me under date 2 Decr., but as usual, speaks rather despondingly of the prospects of the trade in his district. I have letters from Edmonton to 27 Septr. owing to height of the water, and the incessant rains the Saskatchewan Brigade have made, I believe, the longest passage on record from York Factory to Edmonton, say 73 days. This will make the Columbia party very late, the more so, as the Assiniboine Portage was said to be in a dreadful state. Ballenden expected to leave Edmonton on 30 Sept. The Indian prisoner from the Southern Department had got so far

safely, although he nearly succeeded in escaping at the Grand Rapid.

Buchanan writes to me from Fort Pelly on 27 Dec. at which date he describes the prospects of the trade as being tolerably good—and I think the opposition of the Petty traders in that vicinity is not likely to be so active this season as it has been of late.

I have letters from York Factory dated 1 Decr. Oxford House 6 Decr. and Norway House 3rd Jany.—none of them containing much news—though I think on the whole the trade promises to be better all through the low country than last year. Rabbits are said to be on the increase in the neighbourhood of Norway House. Martens are tolerably numerous, and musk rats unusually so. The result of the Trade for the whole Northern Department for Outfit 1850, shows a Net Gain of £44,411. 3. 9. and the vessel took home returns valued at £67,500.

We are remarkably peaceable in the settlement at present, and I think likely to continue so. The Scotch settlers are quite delighted with their parson, who is said to be a very eloquent preacher; and he certainly has the merit of not meddling in secular affairs, which is more than I can say for most of the other parsons in the country.

We had another mail in from St. Paul's the other day, but there were no letters for me from any quarter. An excellent opportunity this for returning some of the very sarcastic observations in your last letter; but I will charitably forbear, as I suppose you were not aware of the establishment of this communication. I hope that the next mail that comes in will bring replies to the letters I sent by Governor Ramsay.

With our united kind regards to Lady Simpson and the rest of your party at Lachine

I remain

Yours very truly

E. COLVILLE

*Private*Lower Fort Garry 26 May 1852¹

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

Before replying to your letter of 15 Jany., which came duly to hand via St. Paul and Pembina on 4th April, I will proceed at once to inform you that we have been visited by a flood, nearly equal in height, and I should imagine far more disastrous in its effects, than that of 1826. I deemed it important that the Governor and Committee should receive early information of this disaster, and have accordingly determined to send off an express by small canoe from post to post via Fort William, which I propose to start on 1 proxo. I have also sent a letter to Pembina to proceed with Kitson to St. Paul, but I have since learned that he will not start before 15 to 20 June, and will have I think great difficulty in crossing the plains, as the greater part of them will even at that date be, I imagine, under water.

To return to our flood, which has been for the last three weeks the sole thing on which we have thought or talked of. On the 1 May, the ice having left the river on 24 April, the water commenced rising, and continued to do so, (at first gradually but on 15 & 16 inst. to the extent of about 13 inches in the twenty four hours), until 20th inst., and having remained nearly stationary for a couple of days, it is now I am glad to say falling rapidly—having decreased about 15 inches altogether. From the best information I can obtain it has I think attained a height within 18 inches of that in 1826—but from the increase in the population and the general prosperity of the settlement the damage is incalculably greater. At the Upper Fort the water was about 16 inches on the floor of the Sale shop, and nearly a foot on the floor of the new house, but beyond the loss of fencing outside the fort I do not think we shall lose anything, as precautions were taken in time. Above the Fort, scores of houses both on the Main River and the Assineboine have been swept away—and from Burke's on the

¹ D.5/33. This letter is endorsed: "*priv.* 1852 Fort Garry 26 May Eden Colville Recd. 18 July Ansd. personally".

Assineboine, and probably from the upper lots on the Main River, to what is called the watermill or Park's Creek, about eight miles above this, I do not think there will be a stick of fencing left. In the Scotch settlement, and generally below the Upper Fort I do not think many houses have been swept away, though many barns and other farm buildings have disappeared, and the chimneys, being for the most part built of white mud, have tumbled down. Few of the Pensioners have lost their houses, but all their fencing has gone, and till the waters subside a little it will be impossible to say what the amount of loss they and other settlers have incurred. They are all encamped on the little Mountain directly opposite the Upper Fort, where also Captain Hill has pitched his tent. I have been up every week since the flood commenced in a small canoe. The last time I left the river at Park's Creek, and took the plains there. About two miles back from the middle church I could not find bottom with the paddle. All the settlers are encamped on the ridge running from the Little Rocky Mountain to Burke's and on the hill behind old Birds. It is curious that few have come down this way, and none lower than the rapids. So much for our present condition, & now for our prospects for the future.

We have on inventory about 16,000 bushels of wheat, which ought to turn out about 6,000 cwt. of flour. The requisition from Norway House is for 1200 cwt., but I hope to get ground and despatched in the course of the summer 2000 cwt., which ought to render us independent for the ensuing season. This will leave equal to 4000 cwt. of flour in the settlement. We have also on hand about 3000 bushels of barley. I am of opinion that the Scotch settlers will secure at least one years consumption of wheat for each of their families, and from Park's Creek downwards, if we have a favorable season an unusual quantity of wheat will be raised. Nearly every acre of available ground down here will be in wheat, and many of those drowned out up above, have rented pieces of land from the settlers down here and put in wheat. The Bishop of Rupert's Land has sown 40 bushels on the Mission farm at the Rapids, & Cokran a like quantity at the

Indian Settlement. Mowat also has put in about 35 bushels, and many of the other settlers nearly as much. The quantity of cattle, sheep & pigs is nearly if not quite, as large as ever it was. I think it will be advisable to lend small quantities of barley to such of the settlers up above, as have no seed, on being satisfied that they will apply it to sowing—and I think all the better class of settlers will have ample time to put in both barley and potatoes after the subsidence of the waters, though the great difficulty in the way of cultivation will be found in the total want of fencing, and the great difficulty there will be even in the course of next winter of renewing their fences, as wood is getting so scarce within reasonable distance. It has been a severe blow to many of the Pensioners many of whom were beginning to farm to some extent on their allotments and were certainly becoming better subjects, as they acquired property, and had a greater stake in the country. They will, on their return to their farms, become quite disheartened, I fear, though it may, perhaps, have the effect of inducing them to leave altogether. Captn. Hill has been very useful in cheering them up, and though not a very bright genius, is really a good fellow, and does all he can to make himself agreeable and useful. The old Major, as usual, has done nothing. He sent all his family and servants down here; they are lodged at the lower end of this house, living of course at their own expense, but he said, he would not desert his post, & has remained all alone in the big house up above, where he has, of course, had nothing to do. I have invited Mrs. Mills and her daughter to stay with us, till she is able to return to her establishment, and the girls at her school, are dispersed through the settlement. She has been an excellent importation, but the Bishop got in such a fright about the flood, that he wanted to pack her off back to England again. I have, however, guaranteed to supply the girls' school with provisions for one year, for I think it would be a great loss to the country, should Mrs. Mills go home, and her school is not likely to consist of more than eighteen, nine of whom are inhabitants of the settlement at any rate, so that it will not cause much additional consumption of provision. The boy's school will

be either broken up for the present, or carried on on a very modified scale. I have great doubts whether the Bishops house, (formerly McAllum's) will be found worth repairing, and in the meanwhile he will come and live at the old parsonage at the Rapids. He is to make a new parson next Sunday, Tom Cokran,¹ a most unwise step in my opinion, as not many months ago he was as drunk as a fiddler—but as I considered it no business of mine, I have not volunteered my advice on the subject.

Referring now to your letter of 15 Jany. I fear that some of my letters to you by Pembina must have miscarried. I annex the dates at which I *despatched* sundry in the course of the autumn and winter. The letters themselves being generally dated two or three days previous to their despatch

26 Sept. sent to St. Paul by Governor Ramsay

19 Decr. Per Sault Packet

3 Jany. sent to St. Paul Per Count la Guiche

2 Feby. „ „ „ Dr. Rae

20 March „ „ Per regular mail.

I hope you have received most of these before this time. I am sorry to hear such a discouraging view of the prospects of the fur sales, as I think the returns generally will be very large; though I have received no very definite account from other districts. Richard Hardisty² has about doubled the returns from Manitobah this year as compared with last, and they are bringing in musquash both here and at the Upper Fort by the pack. They say that rats have not been so numerous in this vicinity for years. Of lynx we have none in these parts. By the last advices from Pembina reaching to 19th inst. we learn from George Setter that trade has been good, and that he has been living in a boat since 30 April, and would continue to do so, as long as he could trade a rat skin. The water stood at

¹ Thomas Cockran, son of the Rev. William Cockran. See p. xv, n. 3, and MacLeod, *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*, p. 145*n*.

² Richard Hardisty, junior, a native of Rupert's Land, entered the Company's service as an apprentice postmaster in 1849. He became a Chief Factor in 1872. See p. 161, n. 2.

6½ feet in the fort. We are expecting daily the arrival of Buchanan and Fisher; had it not been for the high water I suppose they would have been here before this time.

I was glad to learn from your letter of Ballenden's safe arrival at Vancouver. It is unnecessary for me to remark on the news you give me of affairs West of the Mountains. The communication is so much more rapid and frequent, between London or Lachine, and Oregon, that it appears to me the less I meddle with those affairs the better. I am very glad to learn that Dodd has returned to the steamer. I should think great difficulty will be found in keeping up a post in Queen's Charlotte's Islands, though the savage nature of the Indians there, may go some way towards preventing desertion among our men.

The latter part of your letter consists of a synopsis of the topics touched upon in your despatch per Sault Packet, to which I replied at some length on 16 March, so that I need say nothing further on those subjects at present.

I find that in several instances the men employed under Dr. Rae in the Arctic Searching Expedition have been overpaid. All these payments were made under Rae's authority, and it appears to me that it is not the Fur Trade that should suffer in the premises, I have desired Mr. Pelly to send to Lachine an account of the balances due by these men with a memorandum stating the circumstances under which the advances were made; and it seems to me that the matter must be settled between Rae and the Government.

In my letter to you dated 16 March I mentioned the subject of the supplies sent in last year on account of the A.S.E.¹ to McKenzie River. I find that there are on hand in the District 47 cwt. of flour, and 75 bags R.R. Pemican. Neither of these articles are likely to improve by keeping, and I have come to the conclusion that the best way of settling the business would be to credit the Government with the cost price of the article at Red River, and take them over for the use of McKenzie River District. Of course we cannot be expected to repay the freight from Red River to Fort Simpson, but it

¹ Arctic Searching Expeditions.

appears to me that the Government would not complain at our making use of articles of a perishable nature on the terms I have mentioned. Should they not require the dry goods and other articles sent in last year, we might I think take them on the same terms, but there need be no hurry about that, as the goods will not injure by being kept.

As I shall be writing to Anderson in a day or two by L'Esperance I shall authorise him to act in the way I have mentioned, with respect to the Pemican and flour, and make a corresponding reduction in the quantity sent in by the Portage brigade. Should there be anything in my letters by the canoes rendering it necessary to act differently, I can countermand the authority after I get to Norway House and send in the flour that he will require by the Athabasca boats, but I trust that we shall have no overland expeditions to provide for this year as we shall have hard enough work to feed our own population.

I will forbear saying anything about appointments on this occasion, as I can arrange nothing decidedly till I have got the letters by the canoes, and so I will merely say now, that I think I shall keep Pelly here another year as accountant, as I do not think we could manage well with two perfect strangers, Buchanan & Lockhart. Mrs. Pelly also is expecting her confinement in about a month, & will be unfit to travel. Your private letter I shall reply to under separate cover, and the only topic I think I have yet to touch upon is an application made to me this spring by one Tanner, son of the supposed murderer of Schoolcraft¹ at Sault Ste. Marie; who is connected with some American Missionary concern & wished to establish himself at the White Horse Plain. I do not think he belongs

¹ See p. 126, n. 3. James Schoolcraft, who was murdered in 1846, was a brother of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft (1793-1864), the explorer and ethnologist. See Nute, *Lake Superior*, pp. 231-2, "... It was known that he [John Tanner] had threatened the murdered man ... To add to the suspicion, Tanner disappeared at the very time of the murder and was never seen again. However, years later, a Lieutenant Tilden, who had been at the fort at the time, is said to have confessed to it on his deathbed. If this story is correct, the officer probably made away with poor old Tanner, too, whose reputation had been under a cloud all the intervening years ...".

to any particular denomination of Christians, but he is said to be a pious man & a great preacher in Saulteaux. I told him he had better go and settle at Pembina, in American territory, and that, without consulting the Govr. & Committee I could give him no encouragement to settle here. At the same time between ourselves, if he purchase land from one of the settlers, which he was about doing, I do not exactly see how we can prevent him settling here. We have quite as many sects and parsons in Red River as we require & I shall do all I can to discourage any American citizen establishing himself here as Missionary, but if he likes to settle at Pembina & fight Belcourt, & Tanner is big enough to do so, I have no objection.

I remain

Very truly Yours

E. COLVILLE

P.S. Among the letters in the Sault Packet I see one for a Lieutenant in H.M.S. *Investigator*, whence I infer that some people think there is a chance of some of the vessels making McKenzie River and have therefore concluded it will be better to keep the flour and pemican for another season. I shall, therefore, *not* authorise Anderson to make use of it; but I should hope to get your ideas on the subject of the Supplies in general, in the course of the summer.

E. C.

Craigflower, Dunfermline

20 *Septr.* 1852¹

Read this to yourself

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE

I have been consulting with sundry touching your investments, and on the whole have come to the conclusion that you cannot do better than good heritable security in Scotland. At the present time you can get $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent with

¹ D.5/34. This letter is endorsed : "*priv.* 1852 Craigflower 20 September Eden Colville Recd. 8 Octr. Ansd. 9 do."

undoubted security, say the first claim on real estate. Six months notice must be given on either side, and all expenses as to enquiring into the security &c. is paid by the borrower. My cousin George Wedderburn W.S.¹ will be very glad of the job, and you may depend on him for taking due care of your interests. I imagine that higher interest might be obtained, but the security would not be so good. The interest is payable half yearly in May and November.

The only other investment that I have heard of likely to suit are Railway Debentures, on the best of which $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent is paid, but the security is not considered so good, and my Father decidedly recommends the other course. Should you be inclined to sell out of the funds you will let me know, and I will set George Wedderburn to work at once to look out for an eligible security. I do not know whether anybody in London holds your Power of Attorney to sell out of the funds, but, if not, you will I suppose take the necessary steps. I shall write to you on other affairs by this mail under separate cover.

I remain

Yours sincerely

E. COLVILE

P.S. I have just shewn this to George Wedderburn, who desires me to add that the first securities are not to be had at a day's notice, as they are in demand at present, but of course your money can remain in the funds till he has found a good investment.

¹ W.S., i.e., Writer to the Signet.

*Private*Hudson's Bay House
28 Oct. 1852¹Sir G. Simpson
Lachine

MY DEAR SIR

I annex a copy of a letter I received yesterday from Mr. George Wedderburn, on the subject of your proposed investment, by which you will perceive that I have put the thing in motion, though in the present state of the money market I think it may be some time before the money can be placed as you wish. I should almost think, that if only three per cent could be obtained on the best security, it would be better for you than keeping your money in the funds—as they still keep at par or a trifle above it—and should they fall you would lose the opportunity of the advantage you would obtain by selling out now. However, I am in hopes that George Wedderburn will be able to obtain the $3\frac{1}{2}$ p. cent. At the same time I should be glad to get your opinion in course of post in case he can obtain 3 per cent only. I address you under separate cover by this opportunity with regard to H.B. affairs and remain

Yrs. sincerely
E. COLVILLE

(Copy)

Edinbgh. 26 Oct. '52

E. Colvile Esqr.

MY DEAR EDEN

I have yours of yesterday with copy of Sir G. Simpson's to you of 9 Oct. & I have to thank you for your kind mention of my name to him. I shall endeavour to procure such

¹ D.5/35. The copy of the enclosure is in Eden Colvile's writing, and the letter is endorsed: "*priv.* 1852 London 28 October Eden Colvile Recd. 14 Novr. Ansd. 14 do."

security as he wishes, but at present, as I told you, good heritable securities are very scarce. This scarcity, however, of good investment will probably before long, induce speculation in stocks, which would open the door to the Heritable Security investment.

I remain &c.

(sd.) GEO. WEDDERBURN

Private

Hudson's Bay House
London 29 Oct. 1852¹

Sir George Simpson
Lachine

MY DEAR SIR

By the *Y* ship, which arrived two or three days ago, and is now discharging I received sundry communications from Red River, none of which contained anything of importance. The crops are looking well, and the Sioux were frightened at the Half Breeds, and left the plains free to the Hunters, and I understand Buffalo are numerous.

I also received the enclosed letter² from C.T. Jas. Anderson, which I forward for your perusal. You will observe that it is marked *Private*. I will touch upon one or two points in this letter, leaving it you to take your own course after hearing my opinion.

The public letter I have not received, but I suppose you will get that in the course of time. I have, therefore, no opportunity of knowing the reasons for the proposed change in the Youcon Posts. You will remember that we agreed in

¹ This letter is endorsed : "*priv.* 1852 London 29 October Eden Colville Recd. 14 Novr. Ansd. 20 do."

² Anderson's letter is not attached.

thinking it advisable that Anderson should visit that country next year, instead of accompanying his brigade to Portage la Loche, and I imagine you have already addressed him on the subject. I am certainly of opinion that Fort Selkirk would be better placed lower down the river, as we are at present exposed to opposition from the coast Indians, who according to the reports from Selkirk have carried away a great part of the returns from us, and it seems to be considered that if the post was farther down the River the distance would be too great, and the Chilcat Traders could no longer compete with us. Should Selkirk be moved it becomes a question whether one post would not answer all purposes, but I do not feel competent to express an opinion on this point. I think Anderson should be instructed to examine and report on the expediency of this.

I do not know why he has sent out the two witnesses against Manuel. I have no recollection of ever having instructed him to do so.

It appears to me rather a new proceeding for a Clerk to talk about retiring from the *District*. I think Lane should either remain there or leave the service.

I suppose the chief objection Mr. Anderson has to the promotions is that he was not promoted himself. There is time enough for that.

My Father is writing to you about what has been settled at H.B. House touching the Columbia affairs. I think the division of the Columbia into two Departments will simplify matters very much, particularly if the negotiations with the American Govt. is carried out, and I am in hopes that the new form of accounts that Roberts¹ has prepared will enable people at a distance to see what the state of affairs really is.

With regard to my future position my Father has been so busy since he got back to town last week that he has not done anything about it as yet, but I suppose it will be settled in some way or another soon, when he will address you on the subject.

¹ Edward Roberts, accountant in London. For a biographical note see *H.B.S.*, VI, 401-2.

Referring you for all other matters to the Secretary's and my fathers letters

I remain

Very truly yours

E. COLVILLE

Private

London 16 Decr. 1852¹

Sir George Simpson
Lachine

MY DEAR SIR

I enclose a letter² I recd. yesterday from George Wedderburn, and as it appears therefrom that the nature of the security with regard to the giving six months notice &c. is just what you wish I suppose that matter may be considered as settled. In another letter I got from him he says "The way in which the current rate of interest is settled here is that the Banks, Insurance Offices, Widow's fund &c. *lending bodies* meet twice a year & settle what rate they will lend at and whether the rate should go up or down. I never remember them being below $3\frac{1}{2}$; in the railway time they were at 5 p. ct."

With regard to the purchase of the estate as an investment, it is needless to say much about it as it is not at present in the market, but I will merely remark that in addition to the net rental, which you admit would give $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, there is a very excellent house & stables, a first rate kitchen garden, and the timber. I merely mentioned it, because I recollect you once talked to me of investing in land in this country, and, as I have not a very exalted idea of Dundas' prudence, I thought it possible that this property might eventually be in the market.

¹ D.5/35. This letter is endorsed: "1852 London 16 December Eden Colville Recd. 7 Jany. Ansd. 8 do."

² This letter is not attached.

I, of course, took my father's advice on all points connected with this affair, and he quite concurs with me in thinking the investment perfectly safe, & the interest as high as, in the present state of the money market, you can expect, with a due regard to the safety of the Capital.

I am glad to learn that the partition of the salary proposed by my Father is in accordance with your views, and will only add that I shall be at all times ready to take your place at the Council, should you be prevented from going to Norway House.

The Company will not entertain either Lewis' or Donald Ross' application for a prolongation of furlough, and as Lewis may as well be put out of his misery at once I have suggested to my Father that the paragraph in my general letter from Norway House on the subject be taken into consideration next week.

The Finlaysons, Rae & McTavish¹ are all in Scotland—I believe—but I see old Lewis at the House² almost every day.

The sale last Wednesday went off exceedingly well. The castoreum fetched upwards of £5000—the highest price was, I think, 71/- per lb. It has occurred to me that both the quality and quantity of this article might be improved. I am told that Russian castoreum fetches £6 & £7 & in some instances as high as £10 per lb. owing to its being better dried. We are to get a sample of this from one of the castoreum buyers, & we hope to find out through Albert Pelly & Coy. the method the Russians pursue in drying and preparing it for market. As it is, it is one of the best articles of trade we have, and I think it quite worth your consideration whether additional encouragement might not be given to the Indians to bring it in, as the quantity obtained is considerably less than the number of beaver skins would justify one in expecting. At the highest price some of the pods are worth about 12/- @ 14/- which is higher a good deal I fear than we are likely to obtain for our beaver skins.

¹ Chief Factor Dugald Mactavish who was on leave of absence from the Sandwich Islands. He was a brother of Chief Factor William Mactavish and Letitia Hargrave.

² Hudson's Bay House, Fenchurch Street.

Buffalo tongues sold well say about 36/- per dozen, and quills fetched nearly the double of last years prices. Isinglass not quite so much.

The weather continues very mild and wet, and the furriers say they are doing nothing, so that prices will, I fear, rule low.

You will see by the newspapers that Ministers were beat on the budget last night by a majority of 19. I fear that we shall have our two enemies Gladstone & Newcastle in the next administration.

You must have had an unpleasant trip to Washington I am afraid, but trust that your journey will have a good effect.

The porpoise fishery looks promising, and I think it fortunate that the *Prince Rupert* was not sold, as she will be well suited for that service.

With kind regards to Lady Simpson and all your chicks.

I remain

Yrs. very sincerely

E. COLVILLE

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INDEX

INDEX

ABORIGINES' PROTECTION SOCIETY, cviii
 Accounts, 136, 136-7*n*, 147*n*, 161, 268
 Admiralty, Lords Commissioners of the,
 67, 77, 164, 240
Africa, 164
 Agencies, 140
 Agriculture, *see* Oregon Territory ; Red
 River Colony or Settlement ;
 Vancouver Island
 Aitken, W. A., liv*n*
 Albany, 33, 57
 Albany River, 33
Albion, 15*n*, 16*n*
 Alexander, Fort, 32, 33, 126
 Alexandria, 1, 2, 149, 168, 169, 180
 Allan, George Traill, 140*n*, 185
 Allan, McKinlay & Co., 140
 Amelin (Hamelin), Solomon (Salomon),
 lxxxix*n*, xc*n*, c
 American Fur Company, xlv*n*, lv, lviii,
 lxvi, lxviii, lxxiii, lxxx
 Ammunition, 70, 118, 225
 Anderson, Miss, cii, 193
 Anderson, A. C., 67*n*, 149, 235
 Anderson, Most Rev. David, xlviii, 1,
 xcix, c, cii, cv, cxi, cxiii, 22*n*, 64 ; *see*
 also Rupert's Land, Bishop of
 Anderson, George, lxxxiii, 100-7, 109,
 114*n*, 116, 127
 Anderson, James (a), 67, 69, 76, 77, 116,
 118, 119, 149*n*, 159, 212, 214, 222, 224,
 226, 238, 240, 256, 263, 264, 267, 268
 Arctic Searching Expeditions, 67*n*, 76,
 232, 240, 262
 Armstrong's Point, lxxvii
 Arrow Lakes, 169
 Ashburne (Ashbourne), Peter, *dit*
 Lambert, 68
 Ashford, James, 109, 245
 Assiniboia, Council and Councillors of,
 xvii, xxviii, xxxi, xxxiii, xlvii, xlviii,
 lix, lxiii, lxxviii*n*, lxxxvii, lxxxviii,
 lxxxix, xc, xcii, xciii, xcvi, c, ci, cvii,

cxiv, 22, 23, 26, 28-9, 30, 195, 207, 208,
 215, 216, 249 ; District of, xix, xlv,
 xlvi, xlviii, lxxix, civ ; General
 Quarterly Court of, xlviii, lxxxii,
 lxxxiii, lxxxiv, lxxxv-vi, lxxxvii,
 lxxxviii, ci, civ, cvii, 22, 23, 29, 61, 121,
 199, 207, 208, 209, 215, 249 ; Governor
 of, xix, xlv, xlvii, xlviii, lvi, lxxii,
 lxxvii, lxxxii, xciv, 22, 175 ; Sheriff of,
 xlviii ; *see also* Ross, Alexander
 Assiniboine Portage, 256
 Assiniboine River, xiv, xviii, xxiii, xxiv,
 xxxvi, xxxvii, xl, xlix, lxxvi, lxxvii,
 xcviii, cxii, cxiii, 22, 96*n*, 214, 248, 258,
 259
 Athabaska Brigade, 159, 222
 Athabaska District, xli, 1, 97, 119, 135,
 150, 158, 161, 163*n*, 177, 178*n*, 179*n*,
 215, 223, 224, 225, 226, 238, 240, 241,
 242, 249, 255
 Athabaska Lake, xcvi, 120*n*
 Athabaska River, xl, 10, 168
 Aubert, Father Pierre, xlix
 Australia, xlix*n*, cv*n*, 16*n*, 158*n*
 Axe (Housenac), Thomas Howson, 213,
 218
 BABINES, 149
 Bacon, xxxi
 Baie St. Paul, xiv, xxix*n*, lxx
 Baillie, Thomas, *see* Bayley, Thomas
 Balfour, Thomas, 130-3
 Ballantyne, Robert Michael, xxii
 Ballenden, John, as Chief Factor of Red
 River District, xix, lxxix, lxxxii,
 lxxxvi, lxxxix, xciv, xcvi, xcix, c, 32,
 36, 48, 52, 53 ; as magistrate, 207 ;
 character of, 31 ; en route to Columbia
 R., 98, 120, 221-2, 230, 238, 239, 241,
 243, 256 ; illness of, lxxix, 195 ; in
 Oregon, 136, 138, 139, 140, 141, 149,
 161, 262 ; letters from, xc*n* ; letters to,
 lvi*n* ; mentioned, 227, 232, 233 ;

- nephew of, 210*n*, 246 ; on furlough, cv, 197, 200, 210, 211, 217, 220 ; wife of, cii, cvi, 192, 193, 202, 203, 205, 238, 240
- Ballenden, Mrs. John, cii, ciii, cv, 193, 195, 197, 201, 203, 204, 205, 206, 210, 243
- Bannatyne, Andrew, 210, 225, 246
- Bannerman, Donald, 41
- Bannocks, xxxii
- Barclay, Archibald, criticism of, 189 ; letters from, lxiii*n*, lxxiv*n*, lxxv, xciii, xciii*n*, cxiii, 27*n*, 37*n*, 46*n*, 57*n*, 58*n*, 67*n*, 73*n*, 76*n*, 81*n*, 112, 126*n*, 134, 165*n*, 204, 207, 247 ; letters to, 12*n*, 13, 21, 26, 30, 32, 34, 45, 56, 65, 71, 72, 75, 78, 96, 97, 98, 115, 122, 124, 130, 131, 150, 164, 165, 191, 193, 194, 198, 204 ; mentioned, 28*n*, 38*n*, 85, 121*n*, 128*n*, 132*n*, 145*n*, 159 ; secretary to Governor and Committee, lxxv*n*
- Barkley (Barclay) Sound, 15
- Barley, xxiii, xxv, xxvii, xxxiii, 123, 125, 166, 167, 259, 260
- Barnard, Rev. A., li
- Barnston, George, 119*n*, 154, 156, 223, 241
- Bas de la Rivière, 233
- Bayley (Baillie), Thomas, 147
- Bears, 144, 148, 151, 152, 179
- Beauharnois, County of, xcv-vi
- Beauharnois, Seigneurie of, xcv, xcvi
- Beaver, 144, 145, 148, 149, 151, 154, 161, 161*n*, 217, 228, 246, 270 ; caps, 228 ; hats, 161*n* ; wool, 161*n*
- Beaver* (steamer), 5*n*, 16, 136, 140, 144, 152, 162*n*, 190*n* ; *see also* Steamer
- Beaver Creek, xcvi*i*, 99, 205
- Beaver Harbour, 5*n*
- Beef, 74, 152, 156, 198
- Beer, xxxiii
- Belanger, Alexis, 2
- Belcourt, Rev. G. A., xxxviii*n*, xlix, lxx, lxxx, lxxxi, lxxxiii, cix, 77, 264
- Bell, John, 68, 69, 154, 155, 178, 212, 223, 224, 225, 226, 232
- Berland (Breland), Pascal, lxxxix*n*, xc*n*, cviii*n*
- Bernard, Jean Baptiste, 239*n*
- Bethune, —, 209
- Bird, James, lxii, 25, 207, 208, 216
- Bird's (Little) Hill, cxiii
- Birnie, Miss, 136*n*
- Bishop, The (of the North-West), *see* Provencher, Mgr. Joseph Norbert ; (of Rupert's Land), *see* Anderson, David ; Rupert's Land
- Black, Alexander (Kamloops), 218, 231
- Black, Chief Trader John, accident to, 74 ; as accountant, cv, 27, 49, 117, 227 ; as Councillor of Assiniboia, 208, 216 ; as magistrate, 207, 245 ; career of, cv*n* ; E. Colville's opinion of, 197, 202, 203, 230 ; furlough for, 31, 200, 202, 210, 246, 248 ; his relations with J. Ballenden, 217 ; his relations with C. V. Foss, cv, 31, 192 ; in charge of Upper Fort Garry, cv, 33, 37, 66, 67, 70*n*, 100*n*, 106, 154, 192, 198, 209, 211, 213, 214, 217, 219, 229, 231, 240, 241 ; letters from, xxxix*n*, cx, ciii*n*, cv*n*, 33*n*, 121*n* ; letters to, 255*n* ; mentioned, 193, 195, 205
- Black, Rev. John, cx, 74, 121, 253, 254
- Black, Samuel, 218
- Blankets, 20, 70, 80, 188
- Blanshard, Richard, 186, 187*n*
- Blenkinsop, George, 191
- Boards, 8
- Boards of Management, 12*n*, 137, 138, 138*n*, 140, 141, 147*n*, 149, 175, 189, 226, 239
- Boat Encampment, 120
- Boats, xxi
- Bois-brûlés, *see* Métis
- Bonar, Rev. John, xcix
- Bond, J. Wesley, xxii, xxiii, cx
- Boucher, Francis, *see* Butcher, Francis
- Bourke, John Palmer, lxviii, lxxiv
- Bovette(r), François, 199-200
- Brandon House, 205
- Bread, xxxii
- Breland, Pascal, *see* Berland, Pascal
- Brigade, boat, xl, xli, xlii ; cart, xlii
- Bright, Mr., 22*n*
- British and American Joint Commission, 9*n*
- British Columbia, 142*n*
- Brocklehurst, John, 72*n*
- Brochie, William, 15

Brown, J. R., *livn*
 Bruce (carpenter), 48
 Bruce, Baptiste, *xli, lxxxivn*
 Bruce, Pierre, *lxxxiv*
 Bruneau, François, *lxxxv, xc, cxiv, 208*
 Buchanan, A. W., *79n, 98, 154, 167, 203, 210, 223, 240, 257, 262, 263*
 Buffalo, *xxxiv, xxxv, xxxviii, 80, 120, 155, 267; hunt, xvi, xvii, xxvi, xxxiii, xxxiv-v, xxxvi-xl, lii, lxv, lxvi, lxxxi, 22, 26, 33, 66; robes, xxxiv, xxxix, xc, 60, 116, 151, 153, 227; tongues, xxxiv, xxxix, 194, 271*
 Bulger, Andrew, *xxixn*
 Bull, 33, 245
 Bull dogs (flies), 173
 Bunn, Dr. John, *c, ci, 25, 58, 207, 208, 210, 213, 215, 216*
 Bunn, Thomas, *cn, 25*
 Burial Ground, *see* Presbyterians, etc.
 Burns, Rev. Robert, *li*
 Butcher (Boucher), Francis, *158, 158n, 179, 212, 224, 240, 241, 254*
 CADBORO, 6, 7, 18, 180
 Cadboro Bay, 147n
 Caldwell, Mrs., 193
 Caldwell, William Bletterman ("The Major"), as Governor of Assiniboia, *lxvii, liii, lxxvii, lxxix, lxxxiii, xc, cviii, 23, 57n, 79, 80, 121, 208, 216, 217n, 231; career of, xlviii; character of, lxxvi, lxxvii, lxxviii, 23, 25, 30, 194-5, 198, 199, 203, 209, 238, 260; commands Pensioners, lxviii, 35, 36, 52, 53, 59, 76, 101, 105, 113, 196, 245, 246; Foss vs. Pelly and, ci-ii, ciii, 192; instructions to, lxxviii, lxxix; land assigned to, lxxvii; leaves Red River, xlviii, cxiv; letters from, xlviii, xlixn, lii, lxxxivn, xc, cin, 165, 166, 167; letters to, liii, xc, xcii, 114n; mentioned, lxxxix, 243; reinstatement of, cvii, 207; removal from office of, c, ci, ciii, civ, 22-4, 26, 28-9, 30, 193, 198, 203; report by, lxxviii, lxxix, lxxxiv, xc, xci*
 California, *xcviii, 7, 8, 9, 12n, 13, 15, 20, 181, 186, 189*
 Campbell, Colin, 177n

Campbell, Jessie, 175
 Campbell, Robert, *xxxn, 68, 69, 98, 118, 159, 226, 256*
 Campement de Chevreuil, 4
 Canada (Upper and Lower), *xvi, xxv, xxxii, liv, lx, lxvii, lxxiv, lxxxvii, lxxxviii, xc, cxiv, 32, 33, 60, 65, 72, 119, 122, 124, 205, 226, 228, 236, 237; government of, lxvii, 163-4n*
 Canadian Pacific Railway, *lxxiiin*
 Candles, *xxxiv*
 Canoes, *xli, xlii*
 Cape Disappointment, 20
 Cape Flattery, 142n
 Cape Scott, 18
 Carey, G. M., 79
 Carey's Point, 209
 Carlton House, *xlii, 132, 177, 222, 225, 229, 238*
 Carter, Joseph L., 211, 230
 Cascades, 169
 Cash Trade, 137
 Castoreum, 149, 270
 Catfish, *xl*
 Cathcart, Charles Murray Cathcart, Second Earl, *lxvi*
 Cathedral, Catholic, *xxiii, see also St. Boniface Cathedral; Protestant, see Upper Church*
 Cats, 238
 Cattle, *xxi, xxix, xxx, 125, 166, 175, 260*
 Cayuga, 15, 16, 18, 19
 Cedar, 18
 Central Criminal Court, *xcin*
 Chapman, John, *xvn, l, 96, 253n*
 Charles, John (junior), 10-11, 185
 Chelsea Out-Pensioners, *see* Pensioners; Red River
 Chilcats, *see* Indians
 Chipewyan, Fort, *1, 118, 119, 120, 177, 178, 179, 242, 256*
 Chipewyans, *see* Indians
 Chippewas, *see* Indians
 Chouteau, Pierre, Jnr. & Co., *lviii, lxiv, lxxiv*
 Christie, Alexander, as Governor of Assiniboia, *xix, xlvii, lvii, lxxxii, lxxxviii, xciv, 175; character of, lvi, lxxix; leaves Red River, lxxix; letters from, xxviii, xxi, xxxiiin,*

- xlvn, lxin, lxiiin, lxivn, lxvn, lxvin, lxviii, lxixn, lxxn, lxxin, lxxiin, lxxiiin, lxxivn, lxxvn, lxxx, lxxxiin, lxxxiiin, lxxxivn, xcivn, ciin ; letters to, xxviiin, xlvn, livn, lxvn, lxixn, lxxiin, lxxin ; private traders and, lviii, lx, lxi, lxii, lxiii, lxiv, lxv, lxvi, lxvii, lxix, lxx, lxxx, lxxxviii, cix ; son of, 154*n* ; wife of, 174*n*
 Christie, Mrs. Alexander, 174
 Christie, William Joseph, 154, 158, 215, 235, 248
 Church of England, xv, 1, lxxvii, xcviin, xcix, 84, 85, 86, 87, 91, 94, 95, 160, 226
 Church Missionary Society, xvn, xlviiiin, 1, li, xcix, 81*n*, 82*n*, 96*n*, 156, 214
 Churchill, 154, 155, 235, 248
 Clarke, Lawrence, 229
 Clearwater River, 178
 Cloth, xxxi, 228
 Clouston, Anne Rose, cin
 Clouston, Edward, cin
 Clouston, Robert, lxxivn, cin, 34, 57, 228
 Clover, 4
 Coal, 17, 18, 19
 Coal Mine, 5, 6, 11, 14, 15, 16, 145, 182, 191, 203 ; *see also* Rupert, Fort
 Cockran, Mrs., 192
 Cockran (Cokran), Tom, 261
 Cockran, William, xv, xvin, xlviii, 1, xcviin, 22, 91, 96, 200, 205, 208, 214, 259, 261*n*
 College of Preceptors, lxxviiiin
 Collingwood, Mr. (& Mrs.), 22*n*, 194, 196, 200, 202
 Colloney, 180
 Colonial Office, xlv, xlvi, xlvii, lxix, lxxiii, lxxiv, lxxix, xcin, xciii, ci, cviiiin, 21*n*, 26*n*, 28*n*
 Colonies, Secretary of State for the, xlviiiin, lxx, lxxi, lxxvii, lxxviii, lxxix, xc, 144, 187*n*
 Colony Gardens, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 45
 Columbia, 1, 6, 7*n*, 8, 18, 180, 181
 Columbia District, 6, 8, 31, 134, 135, 136, 147, 181, 228, 235, 238, 268
 Columbia Lakes, 138
 Columbia River, xiii, lxvi, 7, 12, 169, 170, 188
 Colville, Andrew, xiv, xxixn, xciiin, xciii, xciv, xcv, xcvi, 126*n*, 168*n*
 Colville, Mrs. Eden ("Madame"), xiv, xcvi, xcviin, cvi, 22*n*, 60*n*, 190, 194, 200, 204, 205*n*, 206, 241, 247, 254
 Colville, Eden, as Councillor of Assiniboia, xcvi ; as Governor of Rupert's Land, xiii, xiv, xciv, xcvi, c, 22, 24, 29, 39, 41, 45, 48, 61, 62, 86, 114 ; as President of the Court and Council of Assiniboia, ciin, civ, cvii, 22-4, 25, 28-9, 30, 121, 203, 207 ; at Council of N. Dept., xc, 21*n* ; career of, xciv-vi ; character of, xcvi, cvi ; father of, 12, 186, 198, 204, 265, 268, 269, 270 ; free trade and, cix ; his views on missionaries ("parsons"), 198, 200, 225, 253, 264 ; in Red River Settlement, xiv, liii, xciv, xcviin, ci, ciin, cvi, cxiv ; leaves Red River, cxiv ; letters from, lii, 1-24, 26-38, 39-41, 42-3, 45-7, 50, 51, 53-4, 56-61, 62, 63, 65-86, 90, 93, 96-127, 128*n*, 130-1, 133-70, 160*n*, 173-271 ; letters to, 27*n*, 34*n*, 37*n*, 39, 41, 43-5, 46*n*, 47-8, 50-1, 52, 54-5, 57*n*, 58*n*, 73*n*, 81*n*, 82*n*, 85*n*, 86, 90, 119*n*, 136*n*, 137*n*, 144*n*, 161*n*, 162*n*, 163*n*, 219, 266-7 ; mentioned, 38*n*, 136*n*, 161*n* ; movements of, 1, 3, 4, 8, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19-20, 21, 22*n*, 60*n*, 66, 134, 154, 164, 165, 168-9, 173-4, 176, 178-9, 180, 183, 184, 221, 222, 233, 238, 239 ; petitions to, c, 22, 23, 24-5, 26, 28-9, 30 ; "Presbyterian question" and, xcix, c, civ-v, 36-7, 38-45, 57-8, 66, 83-93 ; servants to, 205, 206*n*
 Colville, Fort, 135, 138, 141, 149, 169, 170, 181, 234
 Confidence, Fort, 69
 Connell, Andrew, 100, 107-8, 114*n*, 116, 127
 Constant, —, 174
 Constant, Madame, 174
 Constant's House, 174*n*
 Cook, Henry, 63
 Cook, William Hemmings, 121*n*
 Cooper, James, 7
 Corn, Indian, xxvii

Coulouge, Fort, *livn*, 200*n*, 206*n*
 Council, *see* Assiniboia; Northern
 Department
 Cowan, William, 216
 Cowitchen River, 5
 Cowitchen Valley, 15
 Cowley, Abraham, 1, *xcviii*, 207, 214
Cowlitz, 12, 19, 144*n*, 188, 203
 Cowlitz Farm, 8, 20
 Cowlitz Portage, 14, 189
 Cox, John, 244
 Craigflower, 165, 264
 Crees, *see* Indians
 Crofton, J. F., *xxviii*, *xxxin*, *xlvi*, *lxxn*,
 lxxii, *lxxvii*, *lxxviii*, *xc*
 Crooks, Ramsey, *lv*, *lxvi*, *lxxiii*, *lxxix*,
 lxxiii, *lxxx*
 Cross Lake, 67, 240
 Crow Wing Trail, *lix*
 Cumberland Brigade, 233, 238
 Cumberland House and District, *lxxviii*,
 1, 69, 76, 120, 134, 152, 154, 173, 174-5,
 176, 229, 232, 235
 Cummings, John, 220
 Cummings, Malcolm, 219, 220
 Cunninghame, —, 204
 Currency, *see* Red River
 Custer, George Armstrong, *xxxix*
 Customs Duties, in Oregon, 10, 136,
 138*n*, 140, 141, 170; in Red River
 area, *lix*, *lxi-ii*, *lxiii*, *lxxviii*, *lxxxvii*, *cix*,
 67-8, 80

DAHL, GEORGE, *lxxxiii*
Daily News, The, *xcin*
 Dallas, A. G., *cixn*
 Dalles, The, 141, 149, 169, 170
 Dauphiné, Maximilien, *xcn*
 Davidson, John, *ci*, *cii*
 Davis, George, 206
 Deans, Mr. & Mrs., 205*n*
 Delorme, Urbain, *lxxxixn*
 Deschambeault, George, 120, 174, 177,
 223, 224, 241, 242, 249
 Desjarlais, Joseph, 178
 Detroit, *lv*
 Distillery, *xxxiii*, *lvi*
 Dodd, Charles, 190, 226, 262
 Dogs, 78
 Doherty, James, 112

Douglas, James, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12*n*, 13,
 15, 19, 20, 138*n*, 140, 141, 142, 144,
 146, 168*n*, 175, 181, 182, 183, 187, 190,
 191
 Driver, William, 27, 57
 Dubuque, Diocese of, *lxxx*
 Duffy, Charles Gavin, *xc*
 Dunfermline, 165, 264
 Dunvegan, 1, 178, 242
 Durham, John George Lambton, First
 Earl of, *xcv*

EDDYSTONE, *cn*
 Edinburgh, University of, *lviii*, *lxxviii*
 Edmonton, *xlili*, 98, 132, 222, 235, 239,
 243, 256
 Eggs, *xxx*
 Ellice, Edward, *Jnr.*, *xcv*, *cixn*
 Ellice, Edward, *Snr.* ("Bear" Ellice),
 xcv
 Ellice, Fort, *lxiv*, *lxix*, *lxxiv*, *lxxxii*
 English River District, 120, 151
 Ermatinger, Francis, 173, 175, 179, 236*n*
 Ermatinger, Mrs. Francis, 236
 Eskimos, 74, 118, 119*n*, 225
 Esquimalt Harbour, 14
 Express, 10, 16, 20, 21*n*, 27, 32, 65, 72,
 75, 118, 122, 126, 135, 138, 207, 225,
 229, 231, 258

FAIRFORD, 1, *xcviii*
 Fairjeu, Baptiste, *lxxxixn*
 Farming, *see* Oregon Territory; Red
 River Colony or Settlement;
 Vancouver Island
 Favell, John, 32*n*
 Fenchurch Street, 19*n*, 26*n*, 32*n*, 65*n*,
 71*n*, 75*n*, 96, 97*n*, 122*n*, 165, 242*n*,
 247, 250*n*, 270*n*
 Fidler (carpenter), 48
 Fidler (Fiddler), Nancy, 196
 Fidler, Peter, 219
 Finlayson, Duncan, *xxxiiin*, *lvn*, *lvi*, *lvii*,
 lxiv, *lxix*, *xciv*, 196, 236, 270
 Finlayson, Mrs. Duncan, 206
 Finlayson, Nicol, 98, 120, 154-5, 158,
 225, 237, 238, 246, 248, 256
 Fireaway (stallion), *xxx*
 Fires, Prairie, *xxxii*
 Fisher, Henry, *lxix*, 68, 132, 205, 262

- Fisheries, xl, 125
 Fishers, 46, 99, 152
 Fitzwilliam, Charles William Wentworth
 Fitzwilliam, Third Earl, xc v
 Flag, xxiii
 Flannel, 70
 Flappers, 179
 Floods, *see* Red River Colony or
 Settlement
 Flour, xxxii, lxxiv, 8, 12, 13, 20, 76, 139,
 155, 183, 188, 189, 226, 259, 262, 263,
 264
 Flying Post, 239*n*
 Fond du Lac, 120, 225, 226
 Foreign Office, lxvii, lxix
 Forks (of the Red and Assiniboine
 Rivers), xvii, xviii, xix, xxii, xxiv, xc*n*,
 cxii
 Fort William, xiv, xcvi, 1*n*, 21, 22*n*, 233,
 258
 Foss, Christopher Vaughan, Mrs.
 Ballenden and, cii, ciii, cvi, 201, 204-5 ;
 career of, xlix*n* ; character of, lxxvi,
 cii ; debts incurred by, 47, 206 ;
 excluded from Fort Garry mess, 27-8,
 31, 32, 57, 196, 204, 209-10 ; Foss *vs.*
 Pelly, ci-iii, cv, cvi, 31, 230 ; land and
 improvements belonging to, lxxvii, cv,
 35, 36, 47-56, 59-60, 61-3, 72, 117,
 204 ; letters to, 32 ; mentioned, lxxvi ;
 passage for, 32, 35-6, 62, 63, 65, 206 ;
 recalled, cv, cvi, 47, 59 ; second in
 command of Pensioners, xlix, lxxvi, cii,
 35 ; successor to, 76*n* ; suspended
 from duty, lxix*n*, lxxxiii
 Foxes, 80, 99, 144, 254
 Frances, Fort, 33
 Frances Lake, 68, 69, 98, 118, 256
 Franklin, Mr., 10*n*, 21*n*, 184, 190
 Franklin, Sir John, cx, 67*n*, 76*n*, 97,
 173*n*
 Fraser, John, 10*n*
 Fraser Lake, 135, 149
 Fraser, Paul, 1*n*, 148, 173, 174, 175*n*, 182
 Fraser River, 2, 18, 143*n*, 146, 147, 148,
 149, 168, 169, 170
 Freighters and freighting, xli, xlv, lvii
 French Canadians, lx
 Frog Plain (Kildonan), civ, cx, 36-7, 40,
 66, 87, 88, 91, 94, 199
 Fur Sales, 126, 152*n*, 261, 270
 Fur Trade, xiii, xix, xx, xxxiii, xl-i, xliii,
 xliv, xlv, liii, liv, lix, lxi, lxiii, lkv,
 lxviii, lxxxii-iii, lxxxvi, lxxxvii, cxv, 147*n*
 GAULETTES, xxxii
 Gardens, 149
 Garrioch, Peter, xxxii*n*, lix, lxxxiv, lxxxv
 Garry, Lower Fort, (the "Stone" Fort),
 J. Ballenden at, 192-3 ; boat brigades
 at, xl ; E. Colville at, c, cv, 21, 205*n* ;
 description of, xviii, xix-xx, xxii, xxiv,
 cvi, cxiv ; distillery at, xxxiii ; letters
 from, 21, 26, 30, 32, 34, 39, 42, 45, 50,
 51, 53, 56, 61, 63, 65, 71, 72, 75, 78,
 83, 87, 92, 96, 97, 99, 115, 122, 124,
 191, 194, 197, 198, 201, 202, 206, 219,
 239, 242, 247, 250, 252, 254, 255, 258 ;
 mentioned, xliii, 33*n*, 134, 156, 223 ;
 river levels at (1852), cxiii, 128-30 ;
 troops at, lxxii
 Garry, Upper Fort, accountant at, ci, cv,
 31, 167, 193 ; J. Ballenden at, cii, 192 ;
 boat brigades at, xl, xli ; cart brigades
 at, 34 ; description of, xviii-xx, xxii,
 xxiii, xxiv, xxx, xliii ; flood at, cxiii,
 123, 124, 125, 166, 258, 259 ; letters,
 etc. from, xlviii*n*, lvi*n*, 28, 62, 64, 70*n*,
 79*n*, 85, 114, 121*n* ; letters, etc. to, 49,
 63 ; mentioned, lxiii, lxix, 22, 51, 74,
 154, 156, 196, 204 ; Pensioners at,
 xlix, lxxv, lxxvi, lxxix, lxxxiii, 76, 100,
 101, 102, 103, 106, 108, 111, 117, 124,
 216 ; A. Ramsey at, 77 ; trade at, 80,
 211 ; troops at, lxxii, xciii ; work
 carried out at, xliii
 Garton, Johnnie, 196*n*, 206
 Gaudet, Charles P., 230
 George, Fort (Astoria), 20
 George, Fort (New Caledonia), 1, 149
 Georgetown, 231*n*
 Gilmore, Boyd, 145
 Gladstone, W. E., lxxi, lxxii*n*, 271
 Gold, 6, 8, 15, 20, 137, 143, 144, 186,
 187 ; in Australia, 16
 Goldeyes, xl
 Goulet, Aléxis, lxi, lxxxv
 Goulet, Elzéar, lx*n*
 Goulet, Roger, lx*n*, cviii
 Grahame, Frederick Ulrich, 202*n*

- Grahame, James A., 216
 Grand Marais, xl
 Grand Rapids (Red River), xvii
 Grand Rapids (L. Winnipeg), 173, 257
 Grant, Cuthbert, xvi, xvii, xlviii, liv, lxii, lxxxviii, 25, 207, 208, 216, 217, 217n
 Grant, Donald, 239n
 Grant, Richard, 6
 Grant, Walter Colquhoun, 5, 11, 15, 182, 183, 187, 189
 Grantown, xvi
 Grass, *see* Timothy Grass
 Gravesend, 188
 Grease, 120, 227
 Great Exhibition of Works of Industry of all Nations (1851), 161n
 Great Northern Diver, 152
 Great Slave Lake, 150, 226
 Green, James, lv, lxi, lxxx
 Grey, Henry George Grey, Third Earl, xlviii, lxix, lxxivn, lxxvii, lxxviii, lxxix, xci, xcii, 21n, 24n, 187n, 199
 Grey Nuns, Convent School of, 1
 Griffin, C. J., 149
 Griffiths, J. T., xlv, xlvii, lxxii, lxxvii, lxxviii, xci
 Grosse Isle, xciii
 Gunn, Donald, lxxxvi, 244
 Gunn, John, 244, 247
 Guns, 159

 HACKLAND, JAMES, 163
 Half-breeds ("English"), xvii, xlv, lxxix, 205, 231; *see also* Métis (French Half-breeds)
 Halfway House, *see* Frances Lake
 Halkett, Fort, 68
 Hall, Fort, 6n, 7
 Ham, xxxi
 Hamelin, Salomon, *see* Amelin, Solomon
 Hamilton, W. A. B., 67n
 Hardisty, Joseph W., 161
 Hardisty, Richard (Chief Trader), 226n
 Hardisty, Richard (junior), 161n, 225, 261
 Hardisty, William Lucas, 161n, 226
 Hargrave, James, livn, lxxv, 207, 216, 221, 234, 235, 237, 238, 248, 252
 Hargrave, Mrs. James, 82n, 205n, 270n
 Harpooner, 17n

 Harriott, John Edward, lxxxii, lxxxv, lxxxvi, 234, 235, 236, 238, 239
 Hats, 161n
 Hawes, Benjamin, lxxn, 109, 110, 112, 113, 114n, 165
 Hay, xxv, xxxi; *see also* Red River Settlement, hay privilege in
 Hebert, Jean Baptiste (*dit* Manuel), 118, 119n, 163, 224, 236, 268
 Heckenberger, Jane, 121
 Heckenberger, Margaret, 121
 Henry, Alexander (the Younger), xxxv, xxxvi
 Herald (Montreal), lx
 Hill, Joseph, cvi, 76, 78, 79, 124, 125, 165, 166, 259, 260
 Hillyer, C., 81n, 96, 155
 Hogue, Amable, 217
 Honolulu, 18n, 19
 Hope, Fort, 1, 3, 4, 141, 147, 148, 168, 169
 Hopkins, E. M., 133n
 Horses, xxi, xxx, 33, 35, 213, 218, 243, 244; pack, 3, 4, 131, 132, 141, 147, 148, 168, 169, 170, 178, 180-1, 234, 235
 House of Commons, lxxxv, xcin, 186n, 199n
 Housenac, Tom, *see* Axe, Thomas Howson
 Hudson's Bay Company (Governor and Committee of the), accountant, 161n, 268n; archives, xiiin, xivn; chaplain, xvn, ln; charter, xiii, xliii, xlv, xlv, liv, lviii, lix, lx, lxx, lxxviii, lxxxv, lxxxvi, xci, xcii, xciii; chief commissioner, 216n; committee meetings of, 21n, 73n, 75n, 187n; deputy governor, xiv, xciii, xciv, xcvi, 126n, 165, 207; general court, cvii; governor, xcvi, 32, 93, 168n, 207; investigations into conduct of, lxxviii, lxxix, lxxxv, xc-i; letters from, xxviii, xxix, xxxn, xxxiiin, xlvn, lvin, xcii, xciii, 81n, 82n, 85n, 119n, 136n, 137n, 147n, 158n, 159n, 160n, 161n, 162n, 163n; letters to, xxix, xlviii, xlviii, lin, lvn, lviii, lix, lxviii, lxxviii, lxxxiiin, xc, xcii, xciv, cin, 58n, 65, 67n, 94, 133, 168, 237; licence of exclusive trade held by, liv;

- military commitments and, lxxvii ;
 payments to competitors by, lv ;
 possessory rights in Oregon, 9, 137ⁿ,
 138ⁿ, 139, 141, 168ⁿ, 185 ; posts,
 lviii ; relations between Government
 and, xlv, xlvi ; secretary, lxxvⁿ, 21,
 131ⁿ, 133, 133ⁿ, 135, 255ⁿ, 269 ;
 Select Committee on, xlviii, xlviiiⁿ ;
 Vancouver Island granted to, xiii,
 lxxxvⁿ ; Vancouver Island land
 belonging to, 11, 14
- Hudson's Bay House (Lachine), 173ⁿ,
 176ⁿ, 178ⁿ, 183ⁿ, 184ⁿ, 186ⁿ, 191ⁿ,
 201ⁿ, 202ⁿ, 237ⁿ, 255ⁿ
- Hudson's Bay House (London), 19ⁿ,
 21ⁿ, 26, 27, 32, 34, 45, 56, 65, 71, 72,
 75, 78, 83, 96, 97, 99, 115, 122, 124,
 130, 164, 165, 197, 239, 242ⁿ, 247, 250,
 255, 266, 267, 270ⁿ
- Hunt, Robert, l, 207
- Hunter, Rev. James, l, 173, 173-4ⁿ, 174,
 175, 207, 253
- Hunter, Mrs. (1st wife of Rev. J.
 Hunter), 174ⁿ
- Hunter, Mrs. (2nd wife of Rev. J.
 Hunter), 174
- Hunter, James (Fraser L.), 135
- ILE-A-LA-CROSSE AND DISTRICT, lxⁿ,
 xciii, 1, 69, 76, 97, 98, 134, 162ⁿ, 176,
 225, 229, 240, 248
- Iles (Isles), Miss, 37
- Image Plain, 129
- Indents, 70, 74, 158
- Indian Settlement (Baie St. Paul), *see* Red
 River Colony or Settlement
- Indian Settlement (St. Peter's), *see* Red
 River Colony or Settlement
- Indians, Assiniboines, xx ; Chipewyans,
 98, 120 ; Chippewas, *see* Saulteaux ;
 Chilcat, 268 ; Crees, xx ; Lac la
 Pluie, 153 ; Loucheux, 118, 119ⁿ ;
 murders by, 2, 118, 239ⁿ, 256 ;
 Ojibways, xx, xxii, xxxii, cix ; Plains,
 155 ; Queen Charlotte Islands, 143,
 144, 262 ; Rossville, 156-7 ; Fort
 Rupert, 17 ; Saulteaux (or Chippewas),
 xiv, xx, xxi, lxx, 73, 82, 127, 155, 214 ;
 Severn, 155 ; sickness among, 119-20 ;
 Sioux, xx, xxxv, xxxvi, xxxix, lix,
 xcvi, 33, 66, 74, 243, 267 ; small-pox
 among, 2 ; Snake Country, 148 ;
 starvation among, 2, 46, 153, 179 ;
 Swampy Crees, xiv, xx, xxi, xl, xc ;
 Vancouver Island, 5, 182 ; Fort
 Victoria, 181 ; Walla Walla, 148 ;
 York Factory, 82, 155
- Influenza, 78, 120, 202, 223, 248
- Inkster, William, xli
- Interest Rates, 73
- Investigator*, H.M.S., 264
- Iowa, lxixⁿ
- Irvine, —, 213, 218
- Isbister, Alexander Kennedy, lxxviii,
 lxxix, lxxx, lxxxv, xci, xcii
- Isinglass, 271
- Islington (Lac la Pluie), 214ⁿ
- JACOBS, PETER, 157, 240
- James, Robert, l, 214
- Jane, 197, 206
- Jeffrey, John, 228
- Johnson, Francis Goodschall, lxxvii,
 cxiv, 209
- Johnson (Johnstone), John H., 144
- Johnstone Straits, 18
- Jones, David T., xv, xvi
- Juan de Fuca Strait, 144
- Justices of the Peace, 57ⁿ
- KAMLOOPS, 138
- Kane, Paul, 173ⁿ, 174ⁿ, 184
- Kendall River, 73ⁿ
- Kennedy, A., 227
- Kennedy, Philip, 214, 243
- Kenogamissi District, 239ⁿ
- Kentucky, xxx
- Kettles, 80
- Kildonan and Kildonan Settlers, *see* Red
 River Colony or Settlement
- King's Posts, 163, 164ⁿ
- Kittson, Norman W., xlv, lv, lvii, lviii,
 lix, lxii, lxiv, lxv, lxviii, lxix, lxxⁿ,
 lxxiii, lxxx, lxxxi, lxxxii, xcⁿ, xci, cix,
 cx, 46, 67, 116, 153, 219, 220, 227, 253,
 258
- LAC DES ALLUMETTES, 231
- Lac de Bois Blanc, 153

- Lachine, xlvi, xciv, 1*n*, 58*n*, 63, 126, 173*n*, 176*n*, 178*n*, 180, 183, 184*n*, 186, 190*n*, 191*n*, 194, 201*n*, 202, 206, 210, 219, 221, 228, 233, 237, 238, 242*n*, 252, 255, 256, 257, 262, 267, 269
- Lac la Pluie District, 33, 116, 134, 151, 153, 202, 220, 227, 236, 240, 247, 253; *see also* Rainy L. District
- Lac la Ronge, 1*n*
- Lac Travers, 173, 240
- Lady Frances*, 239
- Laffèche, Rev. Louis F. R., xxxvii, xlix, xcii, xcvi, civ, 208
- Lafleur, Charles, 177
- Lagimonier, Benjamin, cviii
- Lagimonière, Julie, 1*n*
- La Guiche, Count Charles de, cx, 78, 80, 82, 96, 97, 228, 233, 249, 253, 254, 255, 261
- Lake of the Woods, lviii
- La Loche, Portage, *see* Portage la Loche
- La Loche, River, 178, 229
- Lamsden, Mr., 195
- L'ance a Sable, 138
- Lane, Richard, 140
- Lane, William D., 193, 211, 268
- Lane, William Fletcher, 179, 212
- Langley, Fort, 1, 4, 16, 18, 135, 137, 141, 145-6, 168, 169, 180, 183
- La Pierre's House, 69*n*, 118
- Larocque, —, 219, 220
- Larocque, Baptiste, lxxxix*n*
- Laronde, Madame, lxxxiii
- Leather, 151, 225, 227
- Lefroy, Mrs. H., 119*n*
- Lefroy, J. H., 119*n*
- Leis, Patrick, 112
- Lemfrit, Father H., 182*n*
- Leonard & Green, 143*n*
- L'Esperance, Alexis, xli, 175, 176, 225, 263
- Letendre, Louis, lxxxix*n*
- Lewes, Adolphus, 141
- Lewes, Frederick, 10*n*
- Lewes, John Lee, 10*n*, 120, 141*n*, 154, 157, 159, 175, 213, 232, 235, 237, 238, 248, 270
- Lewes River, 69*n*
- Liard River (West Branch), 98, 118, 159
- Library, 119
- Lincoln, Henry Pelham Fiennes Pelham Clinton, Earl of, (later Fifth Earl of Newcastle), 186, 187*n*, 271
- Linklater, Magnus, lxxxv, 211
- Liquor, liv, lxix, lxxxviii, xci, 227
- Little Mountain, cxiii, 259
- Liverpool, 32, 35, 36, 63, 164
- Lockhart, James, 210, 263
- Logan, Kenneth, 21*n*
- Logan, Mary, 211*n*
- Logan, Nathaniel, 211
- Logan, Robert, xxxii, 1*n*, 207, 211*n*
- London, 1, 6, 21, 26*n*, 27*n*, 30, 32*n*, 56, 65, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76*n*, 78, 96, 97, 99, 115, 122, 124, 126, 130, 133, 134, 136*n*, 137*n*, 138, 152*n*, 164, 165, 168, 192, 238, 239, 240, 242*n*, 247, 250, 267, 269
- London Land Company, xcv, xcvi
- Long Ridge, xxix
- Loon Skins, 152
- Louis, 204
- Louttit, George, 134*n*
- Low, David, 124
- Lowe, Thomas, 140*n*
- Lower Church, xcix-c
- Lower Settlement, *see* Red River Colony or Settlement
- Lumber, 8, 12, 13, 15, 181, 188, 189, 190
- Lynx, 46, 80, 99, 135, 150, 151, 153, 179, 261
- Lyttelton, George William, Fourth Baron, lxxii
- MACALLUM, REV. JOHN, li, c, 58, 195, 261
- McBeath, John, 41
- McBeath, Robert, 90, 208, 250
- McCormick, James, 112
- McDermot, Andrew, xxix*n*, xli, xlv, liv, lvi, lvii, lviii, lix, lxi, lxii, lxiii, lxiv, lxv, lxvi, lxix, lxx, lxxiii, lxxx, 22, 25, 35, 47, 48, 49, 51, 53, 206, 207, 210, 246
- McDonald, Archibald, 233, 244
- McDonald, Donald, 244
- McGillis, Angus, 217, 219
- McGillis, Donald, 217*n*
- McGillis, Margaret, 217*n*
- McGillis, Mary, 217*n*
- McGillivray, Anne Auldjo, 217*n*
- McGillivray, Simon (junior), 217*n*

- McIntyre, John, 176
 Mack, —, 209
 McKay, Edward, 126
 McKay, Neil, 119, 163, 224, 236
 MacKenzie, Donald ("The Major"),
 201, 201-2*n*, 204, 205, 209
 McKenzie, Hector, 200, 230, 246, 248
 Mackenzie, Hector Æneas, 229
 McKenzie, James (b), 231
 Mackenzie River, 264
 Mackenzie River Brigade, 177, 178
 Mackenzie River District, xli, 57, 67, 68,
 69, 71, 98, 118, 119, 135, 150, 159, 161,
 197, 212, 214, 215, 222, 225, 226, 229,
 256, 262
 McKenzie, Roderick (senior), 115, 176-7,
 213, 232, 244, 247, 248
 McKinlay, Archibald, 140*n*, 185
 McLaughlin, John, lviii, lxvi, lxx,
 lxxix*n*, xci
 McLean, Donald, 2
 McLeod, Alexander Roderick, ci*n*
 McLeod Lake, 1
 McLeod, Sarah, ci*n*
 McLoughlin, Dr. John, 185
 McMalen, William, lxxxix*n*
 McMillan, James, 73
 McMillan, William, lxxxix*n*, c
 McMurray, William, 150, 151
 McNeil, W. H., 17, 18, 143, 191, 203, 215
 McPherson, Fort, 69*n*
 McPherson, Murdoch, 177, 178
 Mactavish, Dugald, 18*n*, 138*n*, 270
 Mactavish, William, cix, 155, 158, 159,
 161, 235, 248, 270*n*
 Magistrates, 57*n*, 207
 Mails, lxi, lxii, lxxiii, 68, 72, 73, 77, 99,
 117, 137*n*, 252, 261
 Mainville, François, 236
 Maitland, Phelps & Co., 19*n*, 68, 78, 186
 Maligne River, 229
 Malmesbury, James Howard Harris,
 Third Earl of, 168*n*
 Manitoba Lake, xvii, xl, xliii, xcvi*i*, 125,
 245
 Manitobah, 74, 97, 99, 220, 255, 261
 Manson, Donald, 2, 3, 149, 215, 234*n*,
 235
 Manson, William, 234, 236
 Maple Syrup, xxxii
 Maples, xxxii
 Mares, *see* Horses
 Marion, Narcisse, lxxx, xc*n*, 246
 Marten Lake, 118
 Marten River, 118
 Marten (Martin), William, 107, 109, 245
 Martens, 46, 68, 98, 99, 118, 120, 135,
 144, 145, 146, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152,
 153, 154, 238, 254, 256, 257
 Marwin, Capt., 12
 Mary Dare, 7*n*, 19, 136, 140, 188, 189
 Mason, William, 234
 Massachusetts, 19
 Matheson, —, ci
 Matheson, Alexander, 41
 Matheson, Angus, 41
 Matheson, John, 41
 Maule, Fox (Second Baron Panmure),
 199
 Maxwell, John, xcvi
 Meat, Dried, xxvi, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxix,
 33, 120
 Melbourne (stallion), xxx, 33*n*
 Mendota, lv
 Merivale, Herman, xlviii, lxxix*n*, xc*n*
 Metcalfe, Charles Theophilus Metcalfe,
 First Baron, lxv*n*, lxvi*n*, xcvi
 Methy Portage, *see* Portage la Loche
 Métis (French Half-breeds), effect of
 flood on, 125; buffalo hunt and the,
 xxix, xxx, xxxiii-iv, xxxvi-xl; chief of,
 xvii, lxii, lxxxiv; committee of,
 lxxxv, lxxxvii, xc*n*, cxiv; Council of
 Assiniboia and, lxxxvii, lxxxviii, lxxxix,
 c; council of the nation of, lxxxix, xc,
 civ; defence methods against Indians
 adopted by, xxxix; description of,
 xvi, xviii, xxx, xxxiv, xxxvi, xl;
 encounter American cavalry, lxv,
 lxvii; fur trade and the, xlv, lxiv-v,
 lxxxii, xciii; history of, xvii; Indian
 treaty and, lxxxi, cix, 77; missionaries
 influence over, xlix; petitions from
 (1845), lxiii; (1846), lxx, lxxiii,
 lxxvii, lxxviii; (1849), lxxxix; (1850),
 c; (1851), cvii-viii; petition to U.S.
 Congress (1845), lxvi, lxx; relations
 between Americans and, liv; relations
 between Sioux and, xx, xxxix, 33, 66,
 243, 267; rights of, lxv, lxx; Sayer

trial and, lxxxiii-vii; schools for, xlix-l; settlements of, xvi, xvii, xxv, xxvi, xl; A. Thom and the, lxxxviii, cvii, *see also* Thom, Adam; tripmen, xlii

Mexican War, lxxxix

Mexico, lxvii, lxxi, 9

Middle Church, 91, 259

Middle Settlement, *see* Red River Colony or Settlement

Miles, George, 210

Miles, John, 137*n*, 147*n*

Miller, Joseph, 162*n*

Mills, Mrs., 81, 121-2, 156, 260

Mills, Mary, 81*n*

Miners, Coal, 17-18, 215

Mink, 144, 151

Minnesota Agricultural Society, xxiv*n*, xxxii*n*

Minnesota Territory, xiii, xxii, lxix, lxxxi, cix, cx, 72, 75*n*, 77, 96*n*, 97*n*

Missions and Missionaries, xlix, 58, 81-2, 126, 127, 151, 155, 156, 160, 162*n*, 163*n*, 214, 225, 226, 231, 263

Mississippi River, xxvii, xxix

Missouri River, xliv, liv

Mitchell, William, 7, 142*n*

Monk, Cornwallis, 209

Montigny, Charles, cviii*n*

Montreal, xcvi, 65*n*, 71*n*, 74, 134, 165, 200, 214, 230*n*, 242*n*, 255*n*

Moose, 179

Moose Encampment, 10*n*

Moose Factory, 81, 82*n*, 200, 231, 239, 247

Morein (Morin), Antoine, lxxxv, lxxxix*n*

Morice, A. G., 2*n*

Moses, —, 136

Mosquitoes, 173, 178, 179

Mouat (Mowatt), W. A., 7

Mount Fairweather, 144*n*

Mowat, Edward, xli

Muir (Mure), John, 17, 145*n*, 182

Murphy, Andrew, 47*n*

Murphy, Michael, 47*n*

Murray, Alexander Hunter, 226

Murray, Donald, 41

Musquash (Muskrats), xliii, 99, 120, 135, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 154, 257, 261

Mussels, 15

NATION, THE, xci

Neah Island, 142*n*

Nelson River, 134, 153

Netley Creek, xxix*n*

New Caledonia, 135, 149, 168, 180, 186, 228, 235*n*

New Caledonia Brigade, 2, 146, 147

Newcastle, Duke of, *see* Lincoln, Henry

Pelham Fiennes Pelham Clinton, Earl of,

Newmarket, 181

New York, lxvi, 19*n*, 32, 68, 78, 180, 186, 255*n*, 256

Nez Perces, Fort, 139

Nisqually, 5, 6, 8, 11, 16, 18, 20, 136*n*, 137*n*, 141, 150, 180, 181, 183, 236*n*

Nitinat, 15

Norman Morison, 13, 19, 144*n*, 188*n*

North American Colonial Association of Ireland, xc*v*

North West, Bishop of, *see* Provencher, Mgr. Joseph Norbert

North West Company, xvi, xvii, xliii, lviii, lxv, lxxxii*n*, 217*n*

Northern Department and Northern Department Council, xiv, lxiv, lxviii, xcvi*ii*, civ, cvii, 21*n*, 40, 42, 44, 60, 82*n*, 85*n*, 115, 119*n*, 120, 134, 136*n*, 137*n*, 147*n*, 152*n*, 155, 157, 158, 160, 161*n*, 162*n*, 163*n*, 164, 197*n*, 202, 210, 213, 218, 221, 234, 237, 239*n*, 257

Norway House and District, xiv, xli, xlii, xliii, xc, xcvi, xcvi*i*, 1, 21, 33, 46, 66, 71, 99, 119, 130, 133, 153, 160, 165, 173, 175, 176, 177, 196, 202, 203, 207, 210, 211, 212, 216, 219, 221, 223, 224, 228, 232, 233, 237, 239, 240, 241, 243, 244, 252, 257, 259, 263, 270

Nowlan, Michael, 112

OAK POINT, xl

Oakes, Thomas, 112

Oats, xxvii

O'Brien, John, 197, 229

Ogden, Peter Skene, 8, 10, 12*n*, 138*n*, 147*n*, 157, 185, 189, 216, 230

Ogden, Peter (junior), 147

Ojibways, *see* Indians

Okanagan Lake, 138

Olympia, 136*n*, 142, 182*n*

- Orbit*, 142
 Oregon, xiii, liv, lvi, lxvi, lxvii, lxxi, lxxii
 Oregon Boundary Treaty, 9*n*, 10, 168*n*
 Oregon City, 184
 Oregon Department, 137-8*n*
 Oregon Territory, 7, 9, 10, 20, 136*n*, 139, 140, 143*n*, 145, 203
 Orkney Islands, 131, 163, 228
 Orillia, 65*n*, 71*n*, 242*n*
 Ottawa, xlix*n*
 Ottawa River, liv
 Otter, 144, 145, 148, 150, 151, 152
Otter, 162*n*
 Oxford House, 99, 154, 157, 224, 257
- PACIFIC MAIL STEAM COMPANY, 203
 Pacific North-west Coast, 137*n*, 142, 162
 Palliasses, 80
 Pambrun, P. C. (junior), 68
 Panama, 6, 8, 12, 138, 180, 187
 Papineau, Louis Joseph, lxxxvii, lxxxviii
 Parentian, Miss, 199
 Park's Creek, 259
 Partridge Crop, 64, 214
 Peace Point, 179
 Peace River, 2, 163*n*, 168
 Peat, 18
 Peel, F., cviii*n*
 Peel River, 98, 256
 Peel River Post (Fort McPherson), 69*n*, 118
 Peers, Augustus Richard, 212, 224, 225
 Peer's River, 4
Pekin, 145*n*
 Pelly & Co., Albert, 270
 Pelly, Annie Rose, ci, 31, 203, 246, 263
 Pelly, Augustus Edward, ci, cii, ciii, cv, 31, 64, 80, 81, 192, 193, 195, 197, 201, 210, 230*n*, 246, 262, 263
 Pelly Banks, 69*n*
 Pelly, Fort, 98, 154, 155, 257
 Pelly, George, 18*n*
 Pelly, Sir John Henry, lxix, lxxi, lxxii*n*, lxxiv, lxxv*n*, lxxvi*n*, lxxix*n*, xci, xciii, xciv*n*, xcvi*n*, xcvi*n*, cin, civ*n*, cviii*n*, 18*n*, 21*n*, 24*n*, 26*n*, 28*n*, 59, 72*n*, 93, 103, 187*n*, 189, 195, 197, 199, 203, 217; letters from E. Colville to, 1, 6, 8, 12, 14, 16, 19, 30, 83, 180, 183, 184, 190, 191, 193, 194, 246, 250
 Pelly & Mactavish, 18
 Pelly River, 69*n*, 98, 118, 256
 Pelly, William, cin
 Peltier's (Armstrong's) Point, lxxvii, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 56, 61
 Pembina (U.S.), xiii, xxxii, xxxv, xxxvi, xlv, xlv, liv, lv, lviii, lix, lx, lxii, lxiv, lxv, lxix*n*, lxxx, cix, cx, cxii, 67, 68, 72, 73, 77, 122, 124, 127, 219, 220, 254, 258, 261*n*, 264; Mission, xlix, lxxxi, lxxxiii, cix
 Pembina Post, xliii, lxviii, lxxiii, lxxxii, cix, 33, 46, 57, 77, 99, 125, 219, 261
 Pembina River, xxxv, xxxvi, lviii
 Pemmican, xxvi, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxix, 33, 76, 118, 151, 155, 179, 198, 226, 262, 263, 264
 Pensioners, xxi, xlvii, xlviii, xlix*n*, lxxvi, lxxxiii, xciii, cii, 35, 37, 46, 47, 55-6, 72*n*, 76, 78-9, 79*n*, 100-08, 110, 111-14, 117, 124, 125, 165-7, 196, 209, 216, 245-6, 259, 260; *see also* Red River Colony or Settlement
 Petitions, *see* Métis
 Phillips, —, 184
 Pickerel, xl
 Piece, lvii
 Pierre, 175
 Pigs, 125, 260
 Pike, xl
 Pine, 18
 Pine Hills, xxix
 Pitt, Fort, 132, 177, 225, 249*n*
 Pixley, Thomas, lxxxiii
 Plain Hunt, *see* Buffalo Hunt
 Ploofe, Antoine, lxxxiii
 Ploofe, Louis, lxxxiii
 Ploughs, xxvi
 Point Commerce, 62
 Point Douglas, lxxii
 Point Mudge, 18
 Polk, James K., lxvii
 Polson, Alexander, 41
 Ponies, *see* Horses
 Poore, Sir Edward, 10*n*, 21*n*, 184-5, 190, 227
 Pope, John, lxxxii
 Pork, 74, 152, 198

Porpoise Fishery, 271
 Port Discovery, 15
 Port San Juan, 15
 Portage la Loche (Methy Portage), xli,
 69, 76, 77, 116, 177, 178, 179, 197*n*,
 214, 224, 229, 256
 Portage la Loche Brigade, xl, 71, 213-4,
 215, 217, 263, 268
 Portage la Prairie, xxix, xcvi, 214
 Portage de Terre Blanche, 178
 Porteous, William, 186*n*
 Portland (Oregon), 143*n*
 Portland Canal, 144*n*
 Post Marks, 19*n*, 65*n*, 71*n*, 75*n*, 96*n*, 97*n*,
 242*n*, 255*n*
 Postage Stamps, 131*n*
 Postal Communications, *see* Mails
 Potatoes, xxv, xxvii, 17, 123, 125, 166,
 167, 175, 181, 214, 260
 Poultry, xxi, xxxi
 Prairie du Chien, xxvii, xxviii, lxix
 Prairies, Fort des, 163*n*
 Presbyterians, Presbyterianism, and "the
 Presbyterian question", xv, xvi, li,
 lxxix, xcix, civ-v, cx, cxi, 36-7, 38-45,
 57-8, 66, 74, 83-96, 121, 197-8, 199,
 228, 250-2, 253
 Preston, John B., 141
 Prices, 158*n*, 188, 189, 228
 Pridham, Mr., 37
 Prince of Wales, 33*n*, 71, 96*n*, 99, 213
 Prince Rupert, 32, 33*n*, 213*n*, 271
 Princess Royal, 145*n*, 147*n*
 Princess Victoria, 13*n*
 Pritchard, John, 25, 207
 Private Trade, *see* Trade, Private
 Provencher, Mgr. Joseph Norbert, xvi,
 xvii, xxiii, xlviii, xlix, lxxx, lxxxviii,
 lxxxix, xcii, xciii, xcvi, civ, 22*n*, 162*n*,
 208, 214, 215, 226, 236*n*
 Provisions, shortage of, i ; plains, 66,
 74, 151, 152
 Pruden, John Peter, 25, 132, 207
 Puget Sound, 144, 181*n*
 Puget's Sound Agricultural Co., 8, 9*n*,
 10, 11, 14, 20, 147*n*, 168*n*, 183, 188
 Pullen, W. J. S., 76, 229

 QUAQUIALLA RIVER, 4
 Quebec, xxvi, lx*n*, lxxx, lxxxiv

Quebec, Archbishop of, lxxx, lxxxii
 Queen Charlotte Islands, 143, 144,
 262
 Quesnel River, 2*n*
 Quills, 271

 RABBITS, xl, 46, 80, 98, 99, 118, 120, 153,
 202, 254, 256, 257
 Rae, Dr. John, cvi, cx, 69, 73-4, 75, 82,
 97, 115, 121*n*, 157, 197, 212, 222, 249,
 255, 256, 261, 262, 270
 Rainy Lake, liv, lviii, lx*n*, lxiv, lxx,
 lxxiii, lxxx
 Rainy Lake District, xli, xliii, lv ; *see*
also Lac la Pluie District
 Ramsey, Alexander, xxii, xxiii, xxxii*n*,
 lxxxi, cix, cx, cxiv*n*, 72, 73, 76, 77, 257,
 261
 Rapid River, 69
 Rat Portage, 202*n*
 Rattray's, 175
 Raven, 15
 Recorder, *see* Rupert's Land ; Thom,
 Adam
Recovery, 142-3, 143
 Red Lake (Michigan Territory), li
 Red River, xiv, xv, xviii, xxii, xxiii,
 xxxii, xxxiv, xxxv, xxxvi, xl, l, lviii,
 cx, cxii, cxiii, 22, 77, 96*n*, 125, 128
 Red River Academy, xlix-l
 Red River Cart, xxi, xxxv-vi, lviii, cx
 Red River Colony or Settlement,
 agriculture in, xxv, xxvi, xxvii-xxxiii,
 lii ; census in, xxi ; churches in, xv,
 xxi, l, li, xcvi, xcix, c, cv, 251 ;
 colonists of, xv, xvi, xvii, xviii ; E.
 Colville's opinion of, 195, 196 ; crops
 in, 22, 26, 60, 66, 74, 116, 240, 267 ;
 currency in, lxiii-iv, lxviii, 32*n* ;
 defences of, lxxi ; description of,
 xiv-xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xliii, lxxxvii,
 lxxxix, cxv, 24-5 ; discontent in, xlii,
 xliii, lxxiii ; experimental farm at,
 xxix ; floods (or danger of) in, cxi-xiv,
 22, 60, 122-6, 128-30, 156, 165-6,
 258-60 ; French colony (Upper
 Settlement) in, xvi, cviii, cxiii, 125 ;
 goods for, xli, lxiii, 32*n* ; government
 of, *see* Assiniboia, Council of ; hay
 privilege in, xxv, xxix, xxxi-ii ; H.B.C.

- personnel in, xviii, 154; H.B.C. (retired) men in, xvii, xviii, 159-60; imports into, lxiii; Indian Village (Baie St. Paul (Saulteaux)), xiv, xx; Indian (Swampy) Village (St. Peter's), xiv, xx, xxii, xxiv, xxxii, xl, xlviii, l, xc; Kildonan (Frog Plain) settlers in, xiv, xv, xviii, l, xcix, civ, cv, cxi; land grants in, lix, lxviii, lxxiii, lxxvi, 32*n*, 115*n*, 234, 244, 247, 251-2; library in, lxxii; Lower Settlement (St. Andrew's), xiv, xvii-viii, xl, cxiv; Métis (Upper Settlement), xiv, xvi, xvii; Middle Settlement (St. Paul's), xiv, cix, cxii, cxiii, cxiv; militia in, xlix*n*; missionaries in, xv, xvi, xlix-li; Pensioners in, lxxv-vi, lxxvii, lxxxii; population of, xiv, xvii, xxi, liii, xcvi; reports on, xxviii, xxxi; river front settlement in, xxiii, xxiv; schools in, xxi, l, cx-in, 37, 81*n*, 121, 156, 215, 238, 251, 260-1; "sugaring" in, xxxii; troops in, xxviii, xlvi, lx, lxvi, lxvii-viii, lxxi-iv, lxxvii, lxxxix, lxxx; Upper Settlement of, xiv, xl, cviii, cxii, cxiii, cxiv, 129; White Horse Plain Settlement (St. François-Xavier), xiv, xl, cxii, 126, 127, 263
- Red River District, xix, xliii, xlv, xlv, liii, lv, lxi, lxiii, lxxix, lxxx, lxxxi, lxxxi, xcii, xciv, 60, 64, 70, 151, 152, 153, 227, 240
- Red River Valley, xiii*n*, xxviii
- Requisitions, *see* Indents
- Rice, 153
- Richardson, Sir John, 173, 176, 178
- Riel (Rielle), Louis, *dit* l'Irlande, lx, lxx, lxxiii, lxxxiv, lxxxviii, lxxxix, c, cii, ciii, civ, cvii, cviii*n*, 198, 199, 208
- Riel, Louis, lx*n*
- Rivière des Islets de Bois, xxxii
- Roads, *see* Routes
- Roberts, Edward, 161*n*, 268*n*
- Robertson, Colin, 233
- Robertson, Lawrence, 224
- Robes, *see* Buffalo Robes
- Rocky Mountain Portage, 10*n*
- Rocky Mountains, lvi, xcvi, cx, 10*n*, 78, 137*n*, 150, 168, 228
- Rolette, Joseph, lv
- Roman Catholic Church, xvi, xcvi*i*, 127, 160, 226
- Rook, Capt., 22*n*, 204
- Rose, John, 237
- Roseau Lake, 116, 220
- Roseau River, lviii, 219
- Rosenburg, Governor, 142
- Ross, Alexander, as leader of Presbyterians, li, xcix, civ, cv, cxi, 36, 38-45, 58, 83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 199, 250, 254; as Sheriff and Councillor of Assiniboia, xlviii, lxi, lxxxiv, lxxxix, xc, c, ci, cii, ciii, civ, cviii, 22, 25, 194, 207, 208, 245; daughter of, lv; farming by, xxvii, xxviii; and Foss' claim on H.B.C., 47, 48, 49, 51, 53, 210; letters to, 28; quoted, xv*n*, xlix*n*, liii, lxxxviii, cviii; son of, cviii; son-in-law of, 253; trading by, xlv
- Ross, Bernard Rogan, 212
- Ross, Donald, lx*n*, lxvi, lxvii, xcvi*i**n*, 125, 128, 157, 174*n*, 202, 203, 212, 219, 223, 234, 238, 240, 241, 248, 270
- Ross, James, xxviii*n*
- Ross, Jane, 174*n*
- Ross, William, cviii, 47, 49, 208
- Rossville, 234
- Rothnie, Alexander, 27
- Routes, 3-4, 141, 147-8, 159, 168-9
- Rowand, John (junior), 249
- Rowand, John (senior), 130, 132, 133*n*, 234, 235, 238, 243, 249
- Royal Artillery, lxxii
- Royal Canadian Rifles, lxxiv
- Royal Sappers and Miners, lxxii
- Rugs, 80
- Rum, 102, 220, 227
- Rupert, Fort, 5*n*, 16-17, 18, 136, 145, 186*n*, 191, 215; *see also* Coal Mine
- Rupert's Land, xlv, xlv, xlv, liv, lxx, lxxviii, xcii, xcvi, 95, 160*n*, 179*n*, 210*n*, 261*n*
- Rupert's Land, Bishop of, as Councillor of Assiniboia, 208; Mrs. Ballenden and, 192, 193; Caldwell and, 195; career of, xlviii*n*, l; character of, 198, 215, 250; journeys made by, 64, 231; letter from, 155; letter to, cx*n*; mentioned, *cin*, 22*n*, 99, 124, 205, 214,

215, 218, 245, 259; missions and, 81, 155, 198, 200; Presbyterian question and, cxi, 36, 38, 39, 58, 66, 83-93, 94-6, 121, 250-2; schools and, 31, 81*n*, 156, 216, 260; *see also* Anderson, David
 Rupert's Land, Governors of, xiii, xiv, xix, xciv, xcvi, c, ciii, cx, 29, 39, 40, 45, 48, 61, 62, 86, 114
 Rupert's Land, Recorder of, xlviii, cvii, cxiv, 58, 160*n*
 Russian American Company, 142, 144, 188

 SA, ANQUA RIVER, 4
 Sacramento River, 12*n*
 St. Andrew's (Lower Settlement), xiv
 St. Andrew's Church, xviii, 89, 91, 93
 St. Boniface, xvi, lxxx, lxxxiii, xciii, xciii, 162*n*
 St. Boniface Cathedral, xlix, cvi
 St. François-Xavier, xvii
 St. Germain, —, lxiv
 St. Germain, Madame, 217*n*, 219
 St. James' Parish, xviii, lxxvii, cxiii, 96
 St. John's Cathedral Church, *see* Upper Church
 St. John's College, li
 St. Joseph's, cix
 St. Laurent, xl
 St. Lawrence River, liv
 St. Louis, lxvi, lxxiv, 245
 St. Norbert, xvi
 St. Paul (Minn.), xxii, xxviii, xxxiv, xl, cix, cx, 68, 73, 75*n*, 77, 96*n*, 97*n*, 115, 116, 117, 122, 126, 163, 252, 253, 256, 257, 258, 261
 St. Paul's (Middle Settlement), xiv, xx
 St. Peter's (Minn.), xiii, xxvi, xxix, xlii, xlv, lv, lvii, lviii, lix, lxi, lxiii, lxix, lxxiv, lxxxi, 31, 32, 34, 35, 57, 62, 63, 65, 66, 72, 76, 78, 82, 184*n*, 197, 200, 201, 205, 213, 220, 221, 228
 St. Peter's (Red River), xiv, xlviii
 St. Petersburg, 142
 St. Thomas of Canterbury, Catholic Society of, lxxx
 St. Vital, xvi
 Sale Shop, 137, 139, 206, 214, 216*n*
 Salmon, 2, 146, 148, 149, 188
 Salt, lxxxvi

San Francisco, 6, 8, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 180, 183, 185, 187, 188, 190
 Sand Hills, xxxvii
 Sandwich Islands, 18, 19*n*, 145, 146, 188, 227, 270*n*
 Saskatchewan Brigade, 213, 222, 229, 233, 237, 238, 243, 256
 Saskatchewan District, xxx, xli, l, 74, 80, 97, 118, 120, 131, 134, 151, 235, 236, 240, 249
 Saskatchewan River, xxxv, xl, xlii, 21*n*, 67, 98
 Sault Ste. Marie, lxxix, 1*n*, 22*n*, 65*n*, 71*n*, 82, 115, 126, 163, 207, 217, 221, 233, 239, 242*n*, 261, 262, 263, 264
 Saulteaux Village, xx
 Sawmill, 139, 189, 190
 Sayer, John, lxxxii*n*
 Sayer, Louison, lxxxv
 Sayer, Pierre Guillaume, lxxxii, lxxxiii, lxxxiv, lxxxv, lxxxvi, xc, xciii, xcvi, ci, cxiv
 Schoolcraft, Henry Rowe, liv*n*, 263*n*
 Schoolcraft, James, 263
 Scotland, xxv, xxvi
 Scots-Orcadians, xvii
 Scott, Peter, 134
 Seamen, 7, 12-13, 16, 181, 190
 Selkirk, Fort, 68*n*, 69, 98, 118, 256, 268
 Selkirk, Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of, xiv, xv, xxii, xxv, xlix, lxv, 38, 244, 251
 Servants, 141-2, 146, 147, 159
 Setter, George, 46, 125, 220, 261
 Seven Oaks Massacre, xcix
 Severn, 155
 Shaganappi, xxxvi
 Shaw, William, 179, 223, 242
 Sheep, xxi, xxx, xxxi, 10, 18, 260
 Sheets, 80
 Sheriff of Assiniboia, *see* Ross, Alexander
 Shetland Islands, 135*n*, 179*n*, 228
 Shingles, 8, 15, 143, 188
 Shoal River Post, 154
 Shoes, 194, 204
 Sibley, Henry H., liv*n*, lvii, lviii, lxv, lxi, lxx*n*, lxxiii, lxxxi, lxxxii*n*
 Sidney (Australia), 16
 Silver, 20
 Silver Heights, cxiii
 Silver Works, 248

- Similkameen River, 3, 141, 147, 168, 169
- Simmonds, M. T., 181
- Simpson, Fort (Mackenzie R.), 68*n*, 69, 77, 116, 118, 119*n*, 212, 262
- Simpson, Fort (Port Simpson), 143, 144, 144*n*, 145
- Simpson, Lady (Frances), xciv, cvi, 176, 177, 178, 184, 190, 194, 196, 198, 204, 206, 241, 247, 253, 254, 257, 271
- Simpson, George (junior), 236*n*
- Simpson, Sir George, accompanied by E. Colville, xiv, 1*n*; as Governor of Rupert's Land, xiii, xix, xlv, liii, xcvi, cix; G. A. Belcourt and, lxx, lxxx, lxxxi; E. Colville as deputy for, xiv, xcvi-vii; his efforts for Red River agriculture and livestock, xxviii, xxix*n*, xxx; his views on Pensioners, xciii; his views on punishment of Indians, 2*n*; investments by, 264-7, 269-70; journal of, 174*n*; letters from, lvn, lviii, lix*n*, lxi*n*, lxxiv*n*, 184*n*, 255*n*; letters to, xxxii*n*, xlix*n*, lin, lvn, lviii, lviii, lix*n*, lx, lxii*n*, lxi*n*, lxxii*n*, lxxii*n*, lxxiv*n*, lxxv*n*, lxxvii*n*, lxxviii*n*, lxxix*n*, lxxxii*n*, lxxxiii*n*, lxxxiv*n*, clii, civ*n*, cx*n*, 1*n*, 6*n*, 8*n*, 10*n*, 12*n*, 14*n*, 16*n*, 30*n*, 31, 33*n*, 73-4, 76*n*, 79*n*, 119*n*, 121*n*, 133*n*, 136*n*, 137*n*, 147*n*, 152*n*, 158*n*, 160*n*, 161*n*, 162*n*, 173-271; London Land Company and, xc*v*; mentioned, lvii, 21, 24, 65, 126; Métis and, lxxv, lxxvi, lxxvii, lxxxviii, lxxxix, xc, xci, xcii, c, cvii, cviii; obtains troops for Red River, lxxvii; Presbyterian question and, xcix, 36, 38, 57-8; private trade(rs) and, xlv, liv, lxiii, lxiv, lxxvii, lxxviii, lxxiii, xcvi*n*; residence in London of, 247; residence in Red River of, xlv, lxii, lxxxvii, lxxxix, xciv, xcvi, c, cvi, 27; retirement of, xciv; salary of, 270; sons of, 194, 204, 236; stock sold by, lxxvii
- Simpson, James, 236
- Simpson, John, 236*n*
- Simpson, John Henry Pelly, 204
- Simpson, Margaret McKenzie, 176
- Simpson, Thomas, 46*n*, 73
- Sinclair, Catherine, 236*n*
- Sinclair, James, xli, xlv, li, lvi, lvii, lviii, lix, lxi, lxii, lxiii, lxiv, lxv, lxvi, lxx, lxxiii*n*, lxxviii, lxxx, lxxxiv, lxxxv, lxxxix, xcvi*n*
- Sinclair, Thomas, xli, lvii
- Sinclair, William (senior), lvi
- Sinclair, William (Chief Factor), lvi, lxxvii, lxxxix, 33, 57, 134, 220*n*, 236, 238, 253
- Sinclair, William (junior), 149, 185
- Sioux, *see* Indians
- Sitka, 142, 144, 182
- Siveright, John, liv
- Siveright, Josette, lxix
- Sixth Regiment of Foot (1782, 6th (1st Warwickshire) Regiment of Foot; 1832, Sixth or Royal (1st) Warwickshire Regiment), xlv, lxxii, lxxviii, 102
- Small, Patrick, 132, 133*n*
- Small-pox, 2
- Smith, Persifor Frazer, 9, 10, 184
- Smith, W. D., lxxii*n*
- Smith, William (Pensioner), lxxxiii
- Smith, William (Secretary), 131-2, 133, 255*n*
- Smith, William Gregory, 45*n*, 133*n*, 255
- Smithurst, John, xlviii, 1, 208, 214
- Smoky River, 179
- Snake Country, 9, 139, 148
- Snelling, Fort, 75*n*
- Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 96*n*
- Somerset, Fitzroy James Henry, Lord, lxxii*n*
- Sooke Harbour, 5
- Souris River, xxxvii, xlv
- Souris Valley, liv, lviii
- Southern Department, lxxviii, c*n*, 227, 228, 239, 246, 256
- Spars, 143
- Spirits, 239
- Staines, Robert John, 182
- Stallion, *see* Horses
- Starvation, 2, 46, 68, 153, 179
- Steamer, The, 5, 6, 11, 14-15, 143, 145, 181, 182, 262; *see also* *Beaver*
- Stevens, William, 79
- Stikine, 145
- Stone Fort, The, *see* Garry, Lower Fort
- Stony Mountain, cxiii

Stornoway, 163
 Stoves, lxiii, lxxxvii
 Strachan, —, 209
 Stuart, C. E., 142*n*
 Stuart (Stewart's) Lake, 1, 149, 179
 Sturgeon, xl
 Sturgeon Creek, 210
 Suckers, 1, 179
 Sugar, xxxii, lxxiv*n*, 34, 136*n*, 234
 Sugar Point, xxxii
 Sullivan, Sir L., 59
Susan Sturges, 142*n*
 Sutherland, Alexander, 33, 57
 Sutherland, Betsy, 34
 Sutherland, John, 34
 Swampy Crees, *see* Indians
 Swan River District, 60, 97, 154, 158,
 218, 223, 238, 240
 Sweeny, —, 209
 Swine, xxi, xxxi

TACHE, ALEXANDRE ANTONIN, xcvi*i*,
 162, 177*n*, 236, 240
 Tait (Tate), John, 179*n*
 Tallow, xxxiv, lvi, lvii, lxii, lxxiii
 Tanner, James, 126-7, 263-4
 Tanner, John, 126*n*
 Taylor, W. H., 96
 Taylor, Zachary, 9*n*
 Tea, 234
 Texas, lxvii, 9
 The Pas, 1, 58, 64, 173, 174*n*, 175, 226, 231
 Thibault, J. B., xlix
 Thibaut, —, 246
 Thistle, Canada, xxvii
 Thom, Adam, as Clerk of the General
 Quarterly Court of Assiniboia, cvii,
 121, 208 ; as a Councillor of Assiniboia,
 xlviii ; as Recorder of Rupert's Land,
 xlviii, lix, lx, lxi, lxii, lxiv, lxvi, lxix,
 lxxxv, lxxxix, ci, cvii, 52, 53, 58, 160*n*,
 161*n*, 208 ; Mrs. Ballenden and, 192,
 201, 202 ; character of, lx, lxxxv,
 lxxxviii, cvi, 205, 209 ; disliked by
 French and half-breeds, liii, lx, lxxxiv,
 lxxxviii, ci, cvii, 199, 208 ; Foss *vs.*
 Pelly and, ci, cii-iii, cvii, 195, 197 ;
 leaves Red River, cvii ; letters from,
 lxxix*n*, xcvi*i**n*, c*n*, ci*n*, cvii*n*, cx*n*, 253*n* ;
 mentioned, 210, 215 ; removal from

office of, lxxxvii, lxxxviii, lxxxix, xcii,
 c, civ, cvii, cviii, 58, 160, 160-1*n*, 231,
 249 ; Sayer trial and, lxxxiv, lxxxvi ;
 son of, 231
 Thom, Adam (junior), 231
 Thomas, Anne, 174*n*
 Thomas, Thomas, 208
 Thompson's River, 1, 3, 135, 138, 147,
 148, 168, 169, 180
 Thorne, James, 144, 190
 Three Rivers, xlviii*n*
 Tilden, Lieut., 263*n*
Times, The, lxxxv, xc*n*
 Timothy Grass, 4, 148, 169
 Tobacco, 70, 118, 159, 175, 214
 Tod, John, 177*n*, 183
 Todd, James, 179, 223
 Todd, William, 25, 94, 96, 134, 218, 223,
 248, 253, 254, 255
 Tolmie, William Fraser, 183, 191, 236*n*
Tory, 144*n*, 147*n*
 Touchwood Hills, 154, 220
 Trade, Free, liii, lxii, lxxxiii, lxxxvi,
 lxxxvii, lxxxviii, lxxxix, xc, xciii, xciv,
 xcvi, xcvi*i*, cvi, cviii, cix, cx ; *see*
also Trade, Private (Illicit)
 Trade, Private (Illicit), xiii, xxxiv, xliii,
 xlv, lv, lvi, lvii, lix, lx, lxi, lxiii, lxiv,
 lxxii, lxxiii, lxxx, 67, 97, 116, 156,
 223, 246 ; *see also* Red River District
 Trade, results of, 135-6, 139, 144, 145,
 146, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154,
 238, 257
 Traders, Private (i.e., local merchants),
 xl, xli, xlv-v, lvi, lvii, lviii-ix, lxi, lxiii,
 lxiv, lxxx, cix, 234
 Treaty, Indian, lxxxi, cix, 73, 77
 Tripmen, xl, xli
 Trois Isles, 173
 Trois Rivières, Bishop of, xciii
 Troops, *see* Red River Colony or
 Settlement
 Trout Lake, 155
 Tullibeas, xl
 Tulloch, Alexander M., 35*n*, 103
 Turner, Mrs., 175
 Turner, George, 112
 Turtle Mountain, xxxviii, xxxix, xliii,
 lviii, lxxiii
 Twines, 70

- UNA*, 142, 143, 162*n*
 United States of America, lxxi, lxx, 9, 10, 136*n*, 142, 168*n*, 181, 185; army of, 7, 8-9
 Uplands Farm, 147*n*
 Upper Church (St. John's Cathedral Church), xv, xcix, c, cv, cxi, 36, 66, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91, 93, 95, 96*n*, 121, 249, 250, 253
 VANCOUVER, FORT, xiii, 5, 6, 8, 10*n*, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21*n*, 31, 120, 135, 136*n*, 137, 138*n*, 139, 140, 141, 142*n*, 149, 161, 169, 170, 175, 181, 183, 184, 186, 195, 210, 216*n*, 228, 230, 241, 262
 Vancouver Island, lxxxvii, xcvi, cv, 1, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 136, 146, 147, 181-2, 183, 186*n*, 188, 191, 232
 Vavasour, Mervyn, lxvii
 Vermilion, Fort, 1, 119, 179, 242
 Victoria, Fort, xiii, xiv, 1, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 31, 135, 136, 137*n*, 138*n*, 141, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147, 162, 180, 182*n*, 183, 185, 189, 190, 191, 210
 Victoria Land (Island), 97, 256
Victory, 18, 20
 WABASSIMONG, lxx, xcvi
 Wages, 7, 12-13, 16, 19, 20, 181, 190
 Wakefield, Edward Gibbon, xc
 Walla Walla, 9, 148
 War, Secretary at, 32, 59, 72*n*, 73*n*, 108, 112, 114, 165*n*, 166
 War Office, lxxi, lxxv, cv, 55, 59, 72, 100*n*, 102, 103, 106, 108, 109, 113, 114*n*, 165, 209
 Warden of the Plains, *see* Grant, Cuthbert
 Warre, Henry J., lxvii
 Warrice (Warice), Joseph, 45*n*, 72
 Washington, D.C., lxvi, lxix, lxxxiv*n*, 8, 141, 271
 Water-mills, xxi, 210
 Watkins, Rev. Mr., 82*n*
 Watson, James R., 230
 Weather Conditions, 2, 6, 18, 66, 71, 74, 98, 240
 Wedderburn, George, 265, 266, 267, 269
 Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, First Duke of, lxxi, lxxii*n*, lxxiv
 Wesleyan Missionaries, 58, 160*n*, 234*n*
 West, Rev. John, xv*n*, 1
 West Branch, *see* Liard River
 Western Department, 137-8*n*
 Wheat, xxvii, xxviii, lii, 111, 112, 123, 125, 139, 156, 167, 175, 189, 214, 259
 White Dog, xcvi, 155, 214
 Whitefish, xl
 White Horse Plain, *see* Red River Colony or Settlement
 Willamette, 186*n*
 Wills, John Mills, 82*n*, 163
 Windmills, xxi, xxiii, xxiv, xxxii
 Wine, 234
 Winnipeg, Lake, xl, xcvi, 122, 134, 239
 Winnipeg River, xxii, lxx, xcvi, 155, 214
 Winnipegosis, lxx, lxxxvi
 Wisconsin Territory, lvi, lxix
 Wishart, David D., 13*n*
 Wollaston Land (Peninsula), 97, 256
 Wolves, xl, 80, 254
 Wood, 260
 Wood Trail, lix
 Wool, xxx, xxxi
 Work, Jane, 191
 Work, John, 12, 136, 138*n*, 140, 143, 144*n*, 216, 226
 YALE, JAMES MURRAY, 146
 Yellow Quill Trail, xxxvii
 York Boats, xli-ii, lxxvi
 York Factory (Y^F), xxii, xxix, xxxii, xxxiv, xli, xlii, xliii, xliv, xlvi, lvi, lvii, lix, lxi, lxii, lxiii, lxv, lxxii, lxxiv, cin, 27, 32, 33, 46, 52, 54, 60, 65, 71, 76, 81, 82, 96, 98, 100, 101, 105, 109, 120*n*, 134, 135, 150, 154, 155, 161, 162*n*, 163, 196, 205*n*, 210, 213*n*, 215, 220*n*, 221, 228, 231, 232, 234, 237, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 248, 256, 257
 Young, Alexander, 10*n*, 185
 Yukon, Fort, 69, 98, 118, 226, 267
 Yukon River, 98, 256

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	(xi)

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24, 162

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